A.N.C.

PLANET COMICS

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No.54
MAY

FICTION HOUSE MAGAZINES
52 Pages

"ROBOTS from INFERNO"
Featuring
MYSTA OF THE MOON

FUTURA
STAR PIRATE
SPACE RANGERS

The BIG OF THE COMICS!

EACH ONE A WINNER... JAM-PACKED WITH FAST ACTION AND DRAMATIC ADVENTURE!

A FICTION HOUSE MAGAZINE

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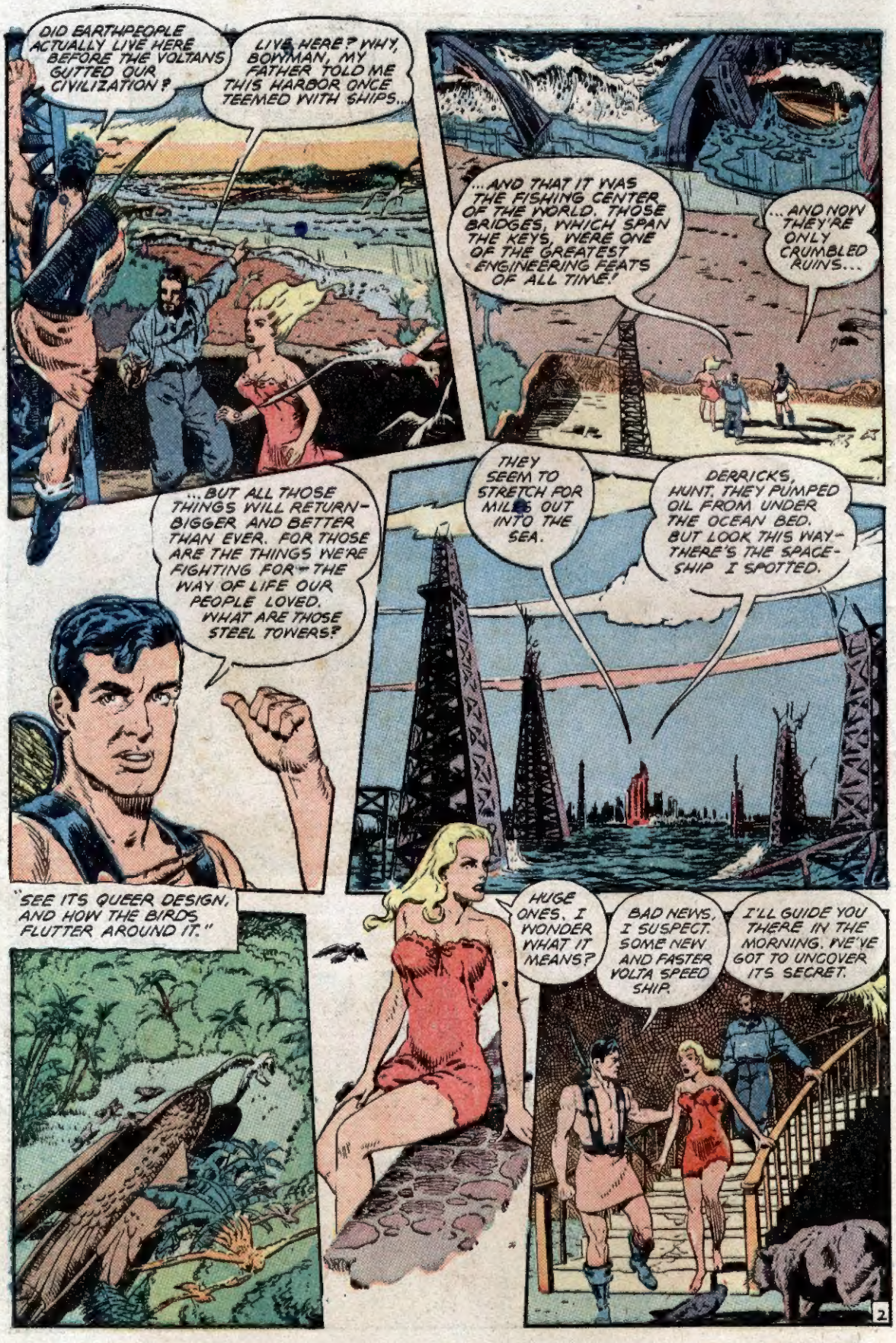
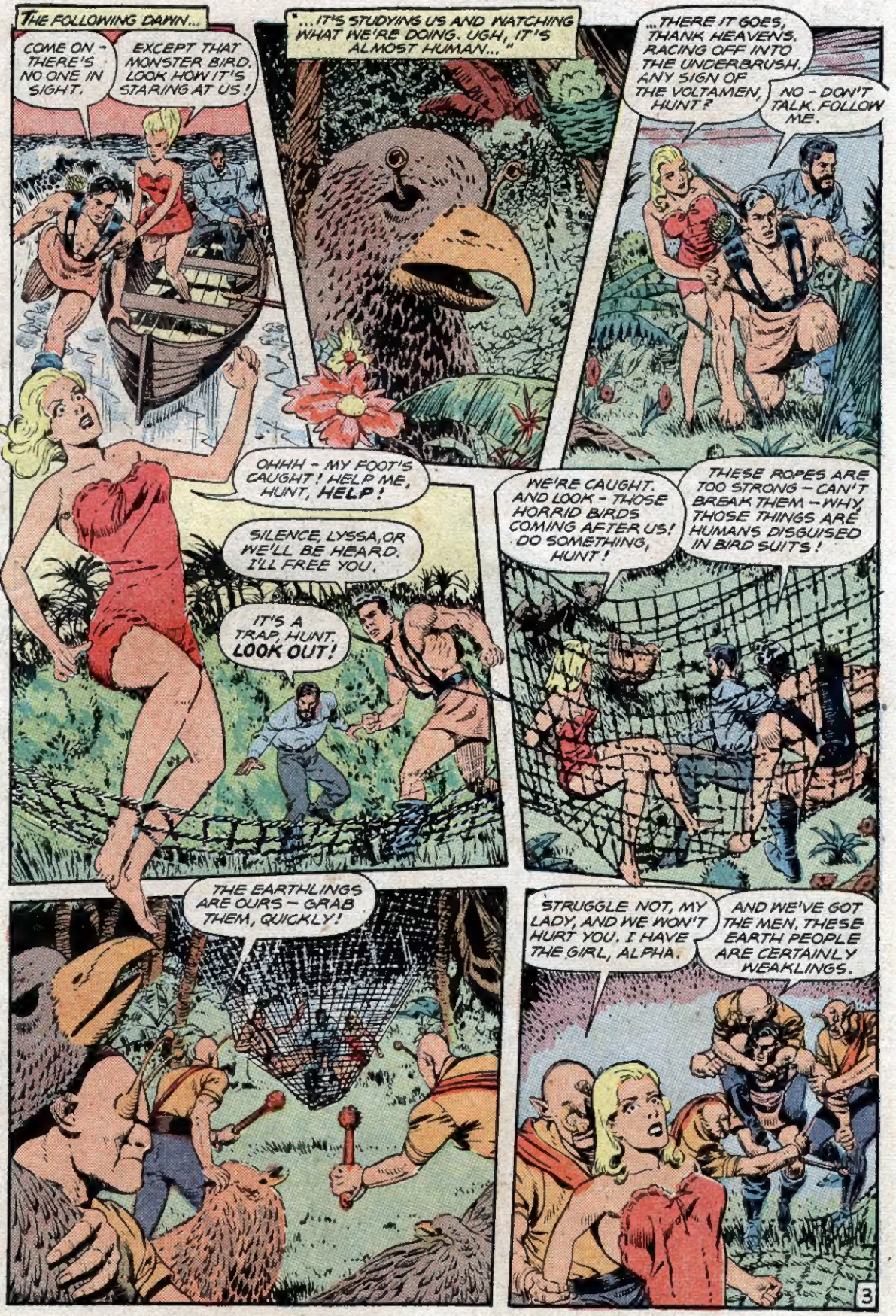
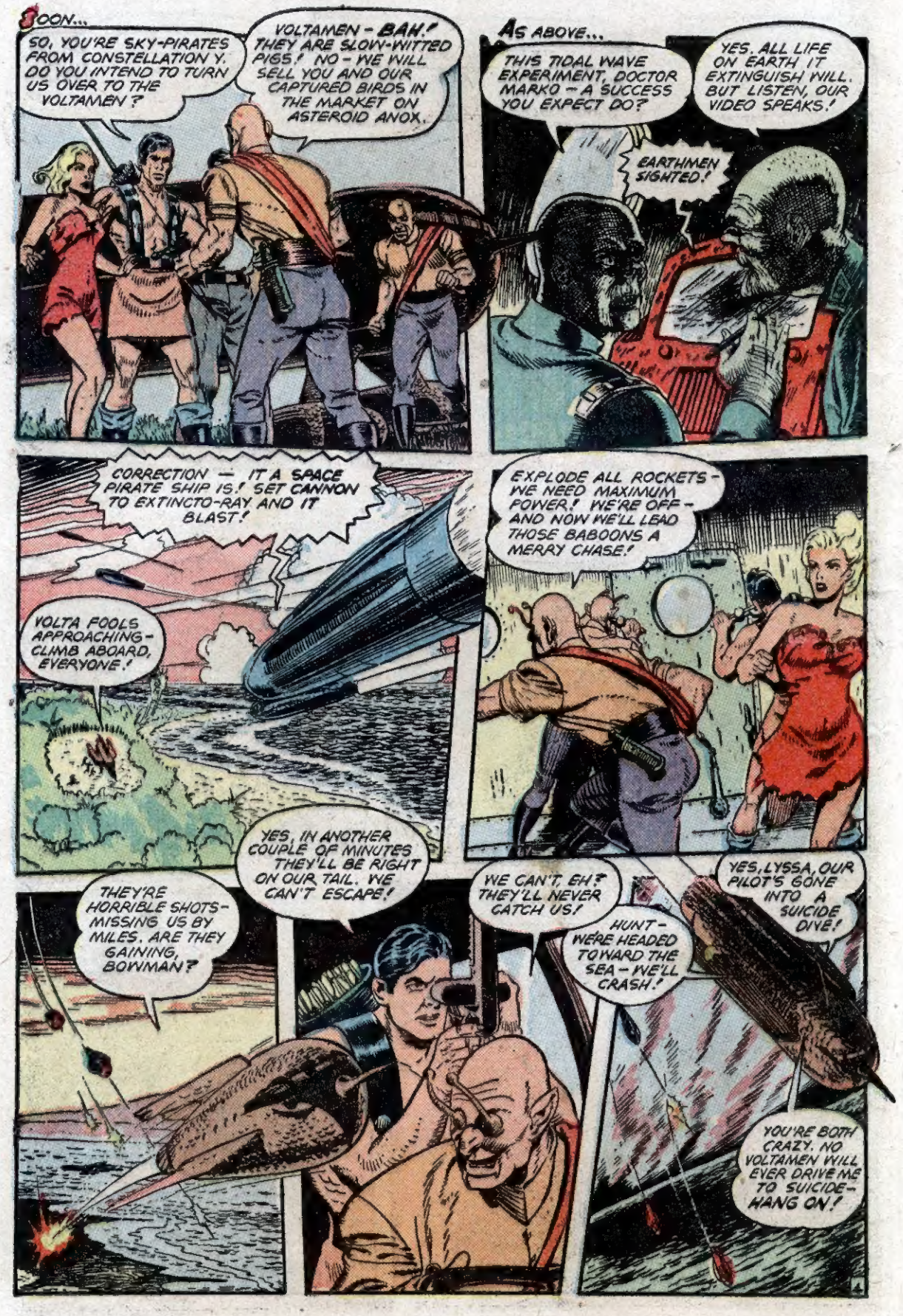
NEXT ISSUE OF PLANET COMICS (No. 55, JULY) ON SALE AT YOUR NEWSSTAND MAY 10th.

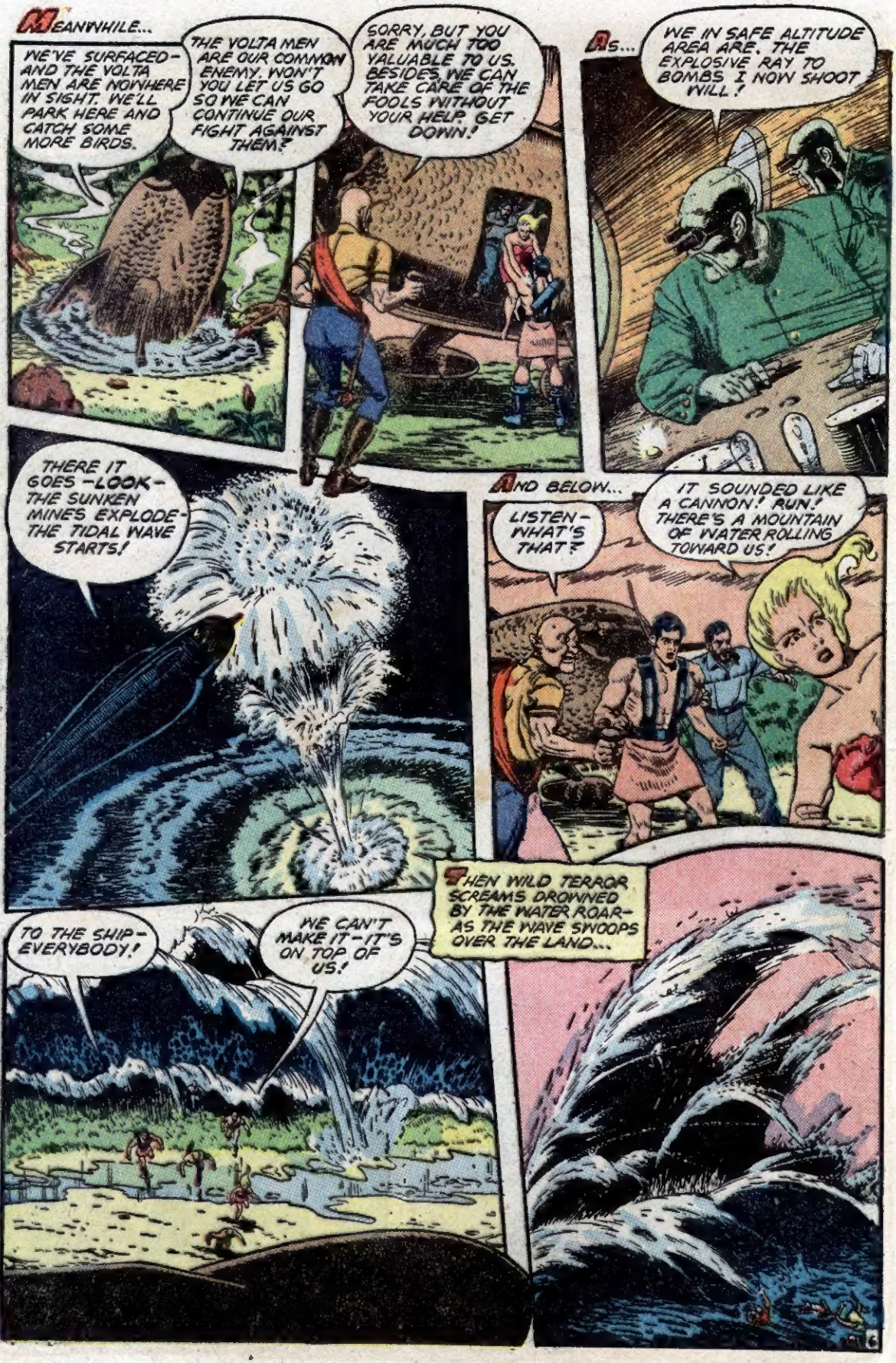
The LOST WORLD
BY THORNECLIFFE HERRICK
VOLTAMEN DEFEATED?
LONG MONTHS HAD PASSED SINCE THEIR SINISTER SPACESHIPS HAD STREAKED THE EARTH SKIES! BUT THEN CAME A STRANGE AND URGENT SUMMONS FROM LOOKOUT SEVENTY-THREE ON THE FLORIDA KEYS — "SOMETHING WEIRD ON THE ADJOINING ISLAND, BOWMAN — THE BIRDS ARE WARNING ME!" AND INSTANTLY, HUNT BOWMAN AND LYSSA HASTEN TO INVESTIGATE...
BUT WHERE DID THE BIRDS COME FROM, AND HOW DID THEY WARN YOU, PHILIP?
EVER SINCE THE VOLTA INVASION, THEY CONGREGATED HERE. RECENTLY THEY HAVE BEEN SCREAMING AND SWOOPING NEARBY.
AND YOU SUSPECT SOMEONE LANDED? DID YOU SEE A VOLTA SPACESHIP?
A SHIP — BUT VERY DIFFERENT FROM THE VOLTA TYPE. YOU'LL SEE IT FROM THE ROOF OF THIS HOTEL.
GEORGE EWING

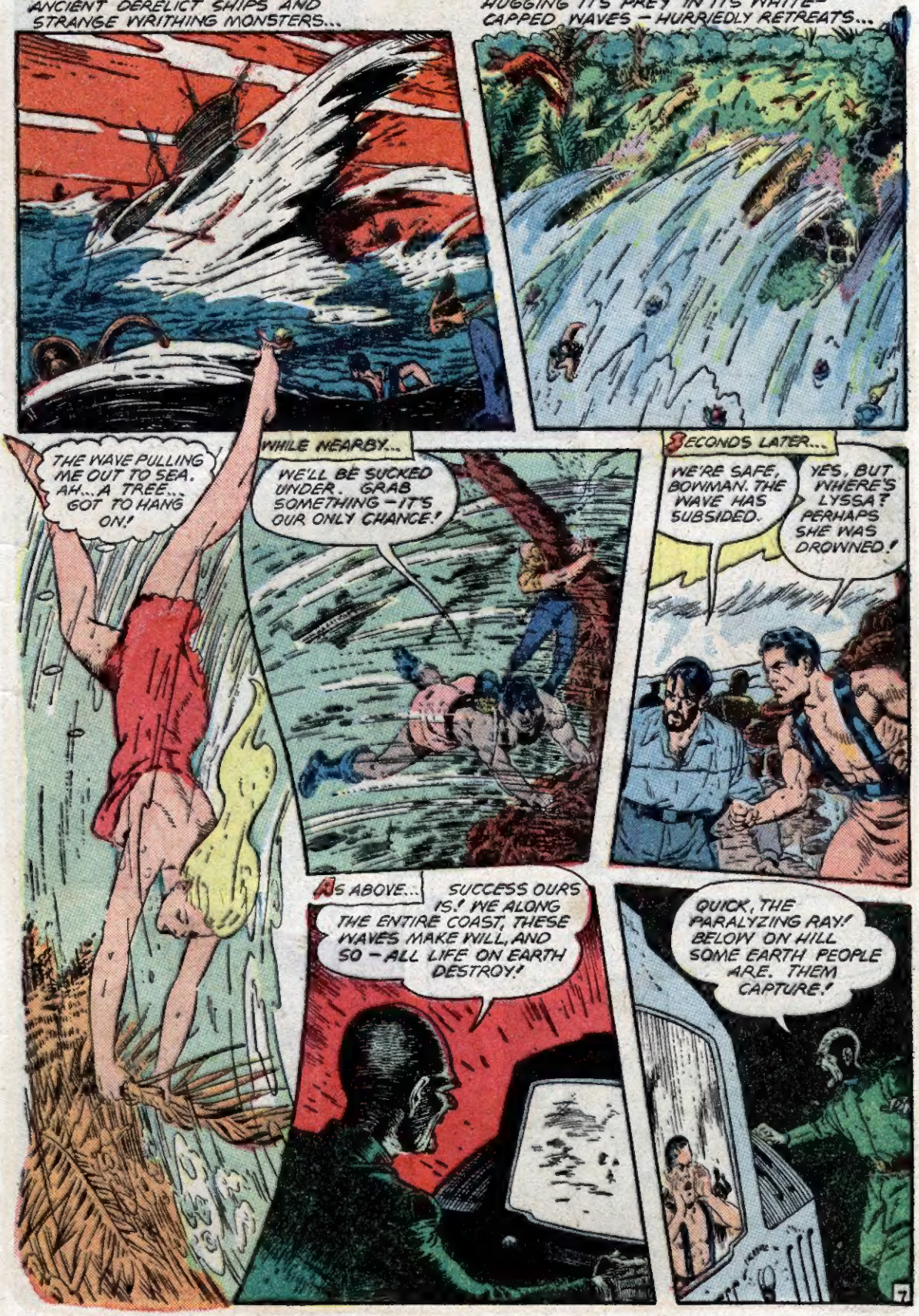

DID EARTHPEOPLE ACTUALLY LIVE HERE BEFORE THE VOLTANS GUTTED OUR CIVILIZATION?
LIVE HERE? WHY, BOWMAN, MY FATHER TOLD ME THIS HARBOR ONCE TEEMED WITH SHIPS..
...AND THAT IT WAS THE FISHING CENTER OF THE WORLD. THOSE BRIDGES, WHICH SPAN THE KEYS, WERE ONE OF THE GREATEST ENGINEERING FEATS OF ALL TIME!
...AND NOW THEY'RE ONLY CRUMBLED RUINS...
...BUT ALL THOSE THINGS WILL RETURN- BIGGER AND BETTER THAN EVER. FOR THOSE ARE THE THINGS WE'RE FIGHTING FOR- THE WAY OF LIFE OUR PEOPLE LOVED. WHAT ARE THOSE STEEL TOWERS?
THEY SEEM TO STRETCH FOR MILES OUT INTO THE SEA.
DERRICKS, HUNT. THEY PUMPED OIL FROM UNDER THE OCEAN BED. BUT LOOK THIS WAY- THERE'S THE SPACE-SHIP I SPOTTED.
"SEE ITS QUEER DESIGN, AND HOW THE BIRDS FLUTTER AROUND IT."
HUGE ONES. I WONDER WHAT IT MEANS?
BAD NEWS, I SUSPECT. SOME NEW AND FASTER VOLTA SPEED SHIP.
I'LL GUIDE YOU THERE IN THE MORNING. WE'VE GOT TO UNCOVER ITS SECRET.

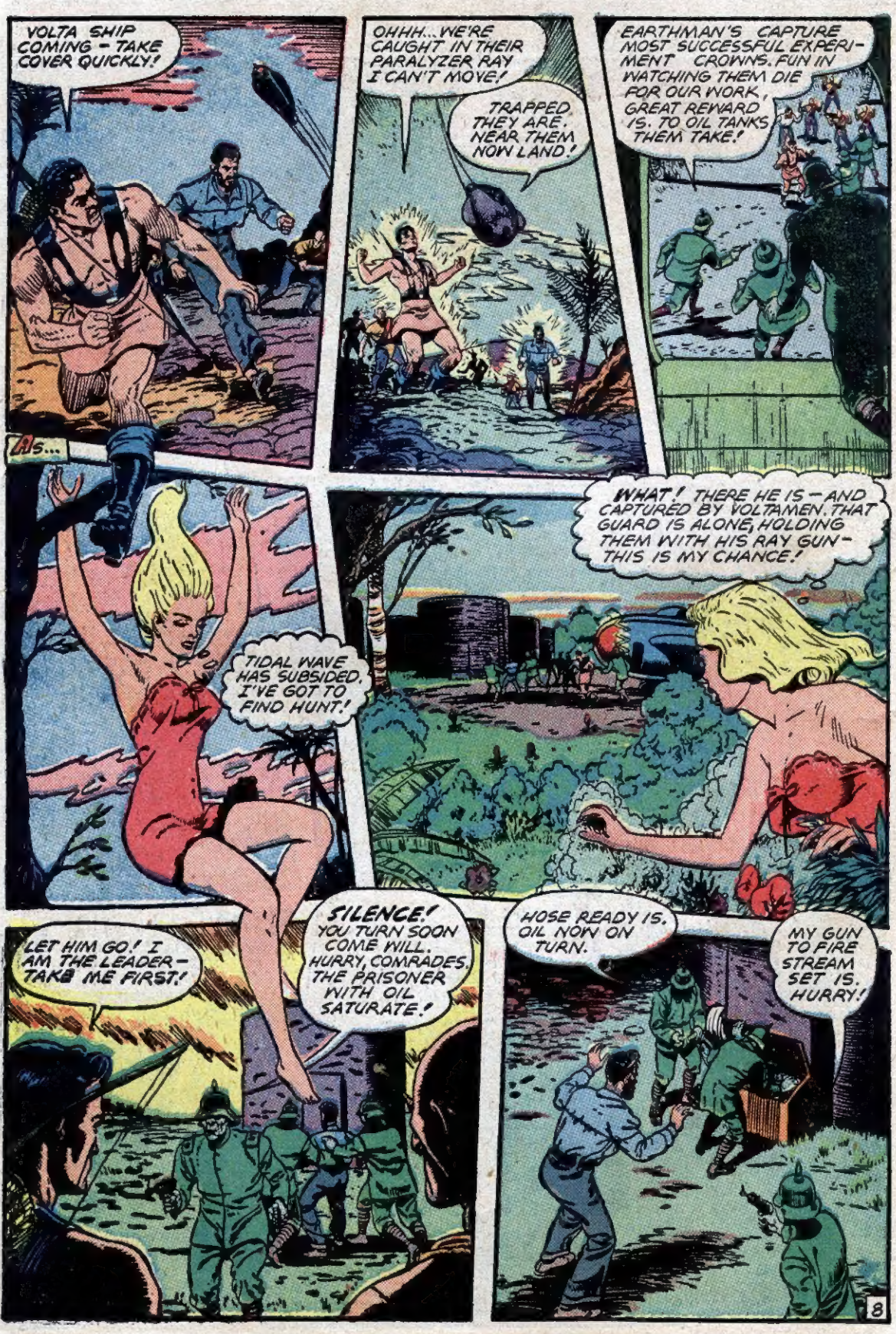

THE FOLLOWING DAWN...
COME ON - THERE'S NO ONE IN SIGHT.
EXCEPT THAT MONSTER BIRD. LOOK HOW IT'S STARING AT US!
"...IT'S STUDYING US AND WATCHING WHAT WE'RE DOING. UGH, IT'S ALMOST HUMAN..."
...THERE IT GOES, THANK HEAVENS. RACING OFF INTO THE UNDERBRUSH. ANY SIGN OF THE VOLTAMEN, HUNT?
NO - DON'T TALK. FOLLOW ME.
OHHH - MY FOOT'S CAUGHT! HELP ME, HUNT, HELP!
SILENCE, LYSSA, OR WE'LL BE HEARD. I'LL FREE YOU.
IT'S A TRAP, HUNT. LOOK OUT!
WE'RE CAUGHT. AND LOOK - THOSE HORRID BIRDS COMING AFTER US! DO SOMETHING, HUNT!
THESE ROPES ARE TOO STRONG - CAN'T BREAK THEM - WHY THOSE THINGS ARE HUMANS DISGUISED IN BIRD SUITS!
THE EARTHLINGS ARE OURS - GRAB THEM, QUICKLY!
STRUGGLE NOT, MY LADY, AND WE WON'T HURT YOU. I HAVE THE GIRL, ALPHA.
AND WE'VE GOT THE MEN. THESE EARTH PEOPLE ARE CERTAINLY WEAKLINGS.

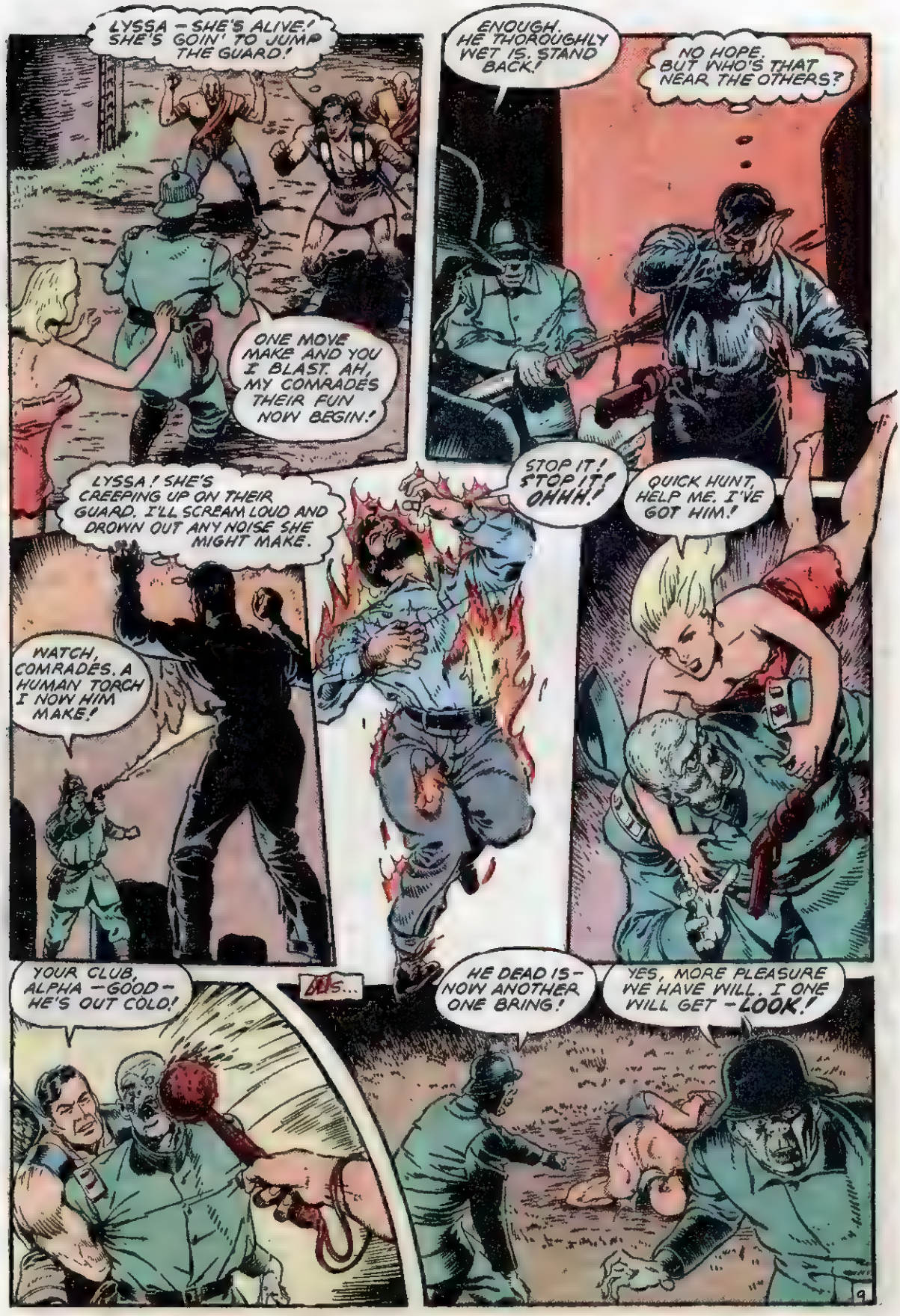

SOON...
SO, YOU'RE SKY-PIRATES FROM CONSTELLATION Y. DO YOU INTEND TO TURN US OVER TO THE VOLTAMEN?
VOLTAMEN - BAH! THEY ARE SLOW-WITTED PIGS! NO - WE WILL SELL YOU AND OUR CAPTURED BIRDS IN THE MARKET ON ASTEROID ANOX.
AS ABOVE...
THIS TIDAL WAVE EXPERIMENT, DOCTOR MARKO - A SUCCESS YOU EXPECT DO?
YES. ALL LIFE ON EARTH IT EXTINGUISH WILL. BUT LISTEN, OUR VIDEO SPEAKS!
EARTHMEN SIGHTED!
CORRECTION — IT A SPACE PIRATE SHIP IS! SET CANNON TO EXTINCTO-RAY AND IT BLAST!
VOLTA FOOLS APPROACHING - CLIMB ABOARD, EVERYONE!
EXPLODE ALL ROCKETS - WE NEED MAXIMUM POWER! WE'RE OFF - AND NOW WE'LL LEAD THOSE BABOONS A MERRY CHASE!
YES, IN ANOTHER COUPLE OF MINUTES THEY'LL BE RIGHT ON OUR TAIL. WE CAN'T ESCAPE!
THEY'RE HORRIBLE SHOTS - MISSING US BY MILES. ARE THEY GAINING, BOWMAN?
WE CAN'T, EH? THEY'LL NEVER CATCH US!
HUNT - WE'RE HEADED TOWARD THE SEA - WE'LL CRASH!
YES, LYSSA, OUR PILOT'S GONE INTO A SUICIDE DIVE!
YOU'RE BOTH CRAZY. NO VOLTAMEN WILL EVER DRIVE ME TO SUICIDE - HANG ON!
4

WE'RE GOING STRAIGHT DOWN-WE'LL SMASH ON THE BOTTOM.
DON'T YOU BELIEVE IT! BETA-RELEASE DISSOLVO RAY!
WHY-I CAN'T SEE THE WATER-EVERYTHING'S BLACK-WHAT'S OUTSIDE?
EARTH, LYSSA. WE ARE BORING THROUGH THE OCEAN BOTTOM.
OUR DISSOLVO RAY MELTS THE GROUND AND MAKES AN UNDERGROUND TUNNEL.
AND THE VOLTA MEN CAN'T FOLLOW US. I WONDER WHAT THEY'RE PLANNING?
AS ABOVE... THE PIRATES ESCAPED HAVE-SO BACK TO OUR EXPERIMENT WE GO WILL.
RIGHT, MARKO. OUR CREW BELOW US SIGNALING IS!
PICK-UP CHAMBER, I DROP WILL!
ANCHOR SET. TO DISEMBARK PREPARE!
QUICK, EVERYONE INSIDE. WE OUR ATOMIC BOMBS SET HAVE. TO SHIP ANCHORED ABOVE WE DRAWN WILL BE.
SECONDS LATER...
ALL COMRADES ABOARD SHIP ARE. THEY REPORT EVERYTHING READY FOR EXPERIMENT IS.
THEN I THE EXPLOSION RAY RELEASE WILL!
5


MEANWHILE...
WE'VE SURFACED - AND THE VOLTA MEN ARE NOWHERE IN SIGHT. WE'LL PARK HERE AND CATCH SOME MORE BIRDS.
THE VOLTA MEN ARE OUR COMMON ENEMY. WON'T YOU LET US GO SO WE CAN CONTINUE OUR FIGHT AGAINST THEM?
SORRY, BUT YOU ARE MUCH TOO VALUABLE TO US. BESIDES, WE CAN TAKE CARE OF THE FOOLS WITHOUT YOUR HELP. GET DOWN!
AS...
WE IN SAFE ALTITUDE AREA ARE. THE EXPLOSIVE RAY TO BOMBS I NOW SHOOT WILL!
THERE IT GOES - LOOK - THE SUNKEN MINES EXPLODE - THE TIDAL WAVE STARTS!
AND BELOW...
LISTEN - WHAT'S THAT?
IT SOUNDED LIKE A CANNON! RUN! THERE'S A MOUNTAIN OF WATER ROLLING TOWARD US!
TO THE SHIP - EVERYBODY!
WE CAN'T MAKE IT - IT'S ON TOP OF US!
THEN WILD TERROR SCREAMS DROWNED BY THE WATER ROAR - AS THE WAVE SWOOPS OVER THE LAND...
6

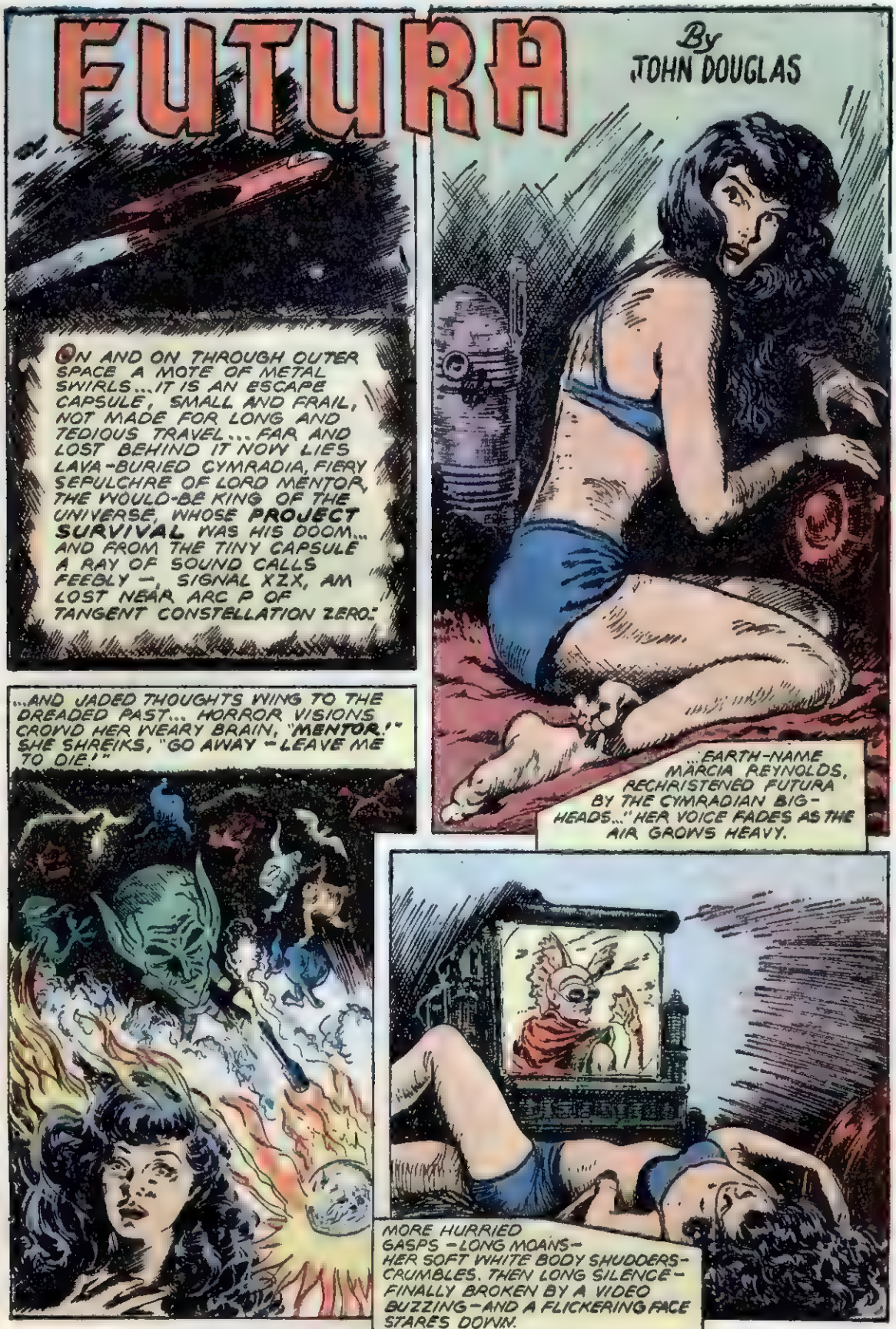

EVER WILDER CHURNS THE ANGRY WATER – ITS CREST SPOTTED WITH ANCIENT DERELICT SHIPS AND STRANGE WRITHING MONSTERS...
...RELENTLESSLY ONWARD – UNTIL WITH A FINAL ROAR, IT CRASHES. THEN, HUGGING ITS PREY IN ITS WHITE-CAPPED WAVES – HURRIEDLY RETREATS...
THE WAVE PULLING ME OUT TO SEA. AH... A TREE... GOT TO HANG ON!
WHILE NEARBY...
WE'LL BE SUCKED UNDER. GRAB SOMETHING – IT'S OUR ONLY CHANCE!
SECONDS LATER...
WE'RE SAFE, BOWMAN. THE WAVE HAS SUBSIDED.
YES, BUT WHERE'S LYSSA? PERHAPS SHE WAS DROWNED!
AS ABOVE...
SUCCESS OURS IS! WE ALONG THE ENTIRE COAST, THESE WAVES MAKE WILL, AND SO – ALL LIFE ON EARTH DESTROY!
QUICK, THE PARALYZING RAY! BELOW ON HILL SOME EARTH PEOPLE ARE. THEM CAPTURE!
7


VOLTA SHIP COMING - TAKE COVER QUICKLY!
OHHH... WE'RE CAUGHT IN THEIR PARALYZER RAY I CAN'T MOVE!
TRAPPED THEY ARE. NEAR THEM NOW LAND!
EARTHMAN'S CAPTURE MOST SUCCESSFUL EXPERIMENT CROWNS. FUN IN WATCHING THEM DIE FOR OUR WORK, GREAT REWARD IS. TO OIL TANKS THEM TAKE!
AS...
TIDAL WAVE HAS SUBSIDED. I'VE GOT TO FIND HUNT!
WHAT! THERE HE IS - AND CAPTURED BY VOLTAMEN. THAT GUARD IS ALONE, HOLDING THEM WITH HIS RAY GUN - THIS IS MY CHANCE!
LET HIM GO! I AM THE LEADER - TAKE ME FIRST!
SILENCE! YOU TURN SOON COME WILL. HURRY, COMRADES, THE PRISONER WITH OIL SATURATE!
HOSE READY IS. OIL NOW ON TURN.
MY GUN TO FIRE STREAM SET IS. HURRY!


LYSSA – SHE'S ALIVE! SHE'S GOIN' TO JUMP THE GUARD!
ONE MOVE MAKE AND YOU I BLAST. AH, MY COMRADES THEIR FUN NOW BEGIN!
ENOUGH. HE THOROUGHLY WET IS. STAND BACK!
NO HOPE. BUT WHO'S THAT NEAR THE OTHERS?
LYSSA! SHE'S CREEPING UP ON THEIR GUARD. I'LL SCREAM LOUD AND DROWN OUT ANY NOISE SHE MIGHT MAKE.
WATCH, COMRADES. A HUMAN TORCH I NOW HIM MAKE!
STOP IT! STOP IT! OHHH!
QUICK HUNT, HELP ME. I'VE GOT HIM!
YOUR CLUB, ALPHA – GOOD – HE'S OUT COLD!
BAS...
HE DEAD IS – NOW ANOTHER ONE BRING!
YES, MORE PLEASURE WE HAVE WILL. I ONE WILL GET – LOOK!

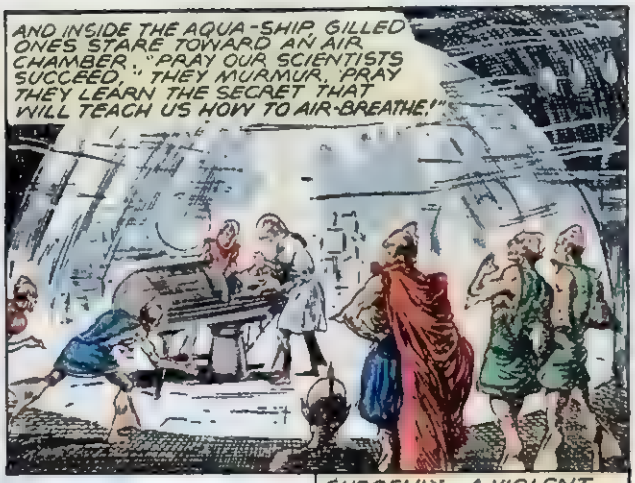
EARTHGIRL OUR GUARD KILLED DID. PRISONERS FREE ARE - AFTER THEM - WHAT!
QUICK, HUNT A BURNING ARROW!
SHE THE TANK SMASHED HAS! THAT EARTHMAN SHOOTING IS!
THEY'RE SOAKED AND BLINDED WITH THE OIL. AND THIS SHOULD FINISH THE JOB!
WE BURNING ARE - EARTHPEOPLE LISTEN - LISTEN!
SAVE US AND WE EARTH BACK TO YOU GIVE WILL! ANYTHING YOU ASK WE TO YOU GIVE WILL - ONLY US HELP! - OHHH!
THEY'RE ALL DEAD, ALPHA. EVEN IF WE COULD HAVE HELPED THEM, IT WOULD HAVE BEEN FOOLISH. A VOLTAMAN'S WORD MEANS NOTHING!
I KNOW. AND NOW WE LEAVE IN THEIR SHIP. IF YOU EVER NEED HELP, CONTACT OUR CONSTELLATION!
OON...
UGH, HUNT - PIRATES, A TIDAL WAVE, THEN PRISONERS OF THE VOLTAMEN - PERHAPS NOW WE CAN REST FOR AWHILE!
YES, LYSSA, BUT THE VOLTAMEN WILL BE BACK. AND DON'T FORGET WE HAVE GAINED AN ALLY!

LOST WORLD APPEARS IN EVERY ISSUE OF PLANET COMICS!


FUTURA
By JOHN DOUGLAS
ON AND ON THROUGH OUTER SPACE A MOTE OF METAL SWIRLS...IT IS AN ESCAPE CAPSULE, SMALL AND FRAIL, NOT MADE FOR LONG AND TEDIOUS TRAVEL... FAR AND LOST BEHIND IT NOW LIES LAVA-BURIED CYMRADIA, FIERY SEPULCHRE OF LORD MENTOR, THE WOULD-BE KING OF THE UNIVERSE, WHOSE PROJECT SURVIVAL WAS HIS DOOM... AND FROM THE TINY CAPSULE A RAY OF SOUND CALLS FEEBLY —, SIGNAL XZX, AM LOST NEAR ARC P OF TANGENT CONSTELLATION ZERO."
...EARTH-NAME MARCIA REYNOLDS, RECHRISTENED FUTURA BY THE CYMRADIAN BIG-HEADS..." HER VOICE FADES AS THE AIR GROWS HEAVY.
...AND JADED THOUGHTS WING TO THE DREADED PAST... HORROR VISIONS CROWD HER WEARY BRAIN, "MENTOR!" SHE SHRIEKS, "GO AWAY — LEAVE ME TO DIE!"
MORE HURRIED GASPS — LONG MOANS — HER SOFT WHITE BODY SHUDDERS — CRUMBLES. THEN LONG SILENCE — FINALLY BROKEN BY A VIDEO BUZZING — AND A FLICKERING FACE STARES DOWN.

AS WEAVING A WINDING BLAZE — TRAIL PAST PLANET, ASTEROID AND STAR BELTS, A VENUSIAN SPACER COMES ROARING... FUGITIVE FROM THI, CRUEL RAIDER-TYRANT, WHO RULES THE FAR EAST GALAXY.

AND INSIDE THE AQUA-SHIP, GILLED ONES STARE TOWARD AN AIR CHAMBER. "PRAY OUR SCIENTISTS SUCCEED," THEY MURMUR, "PRAY THEY LEARN THE SECRET THAT WILL TEACH US HOW TO AIR-BREATHE!"

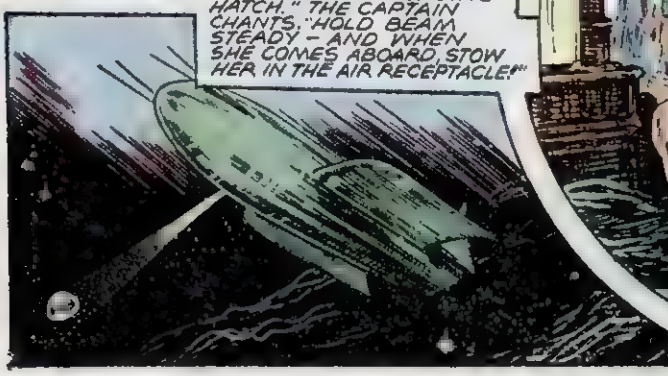


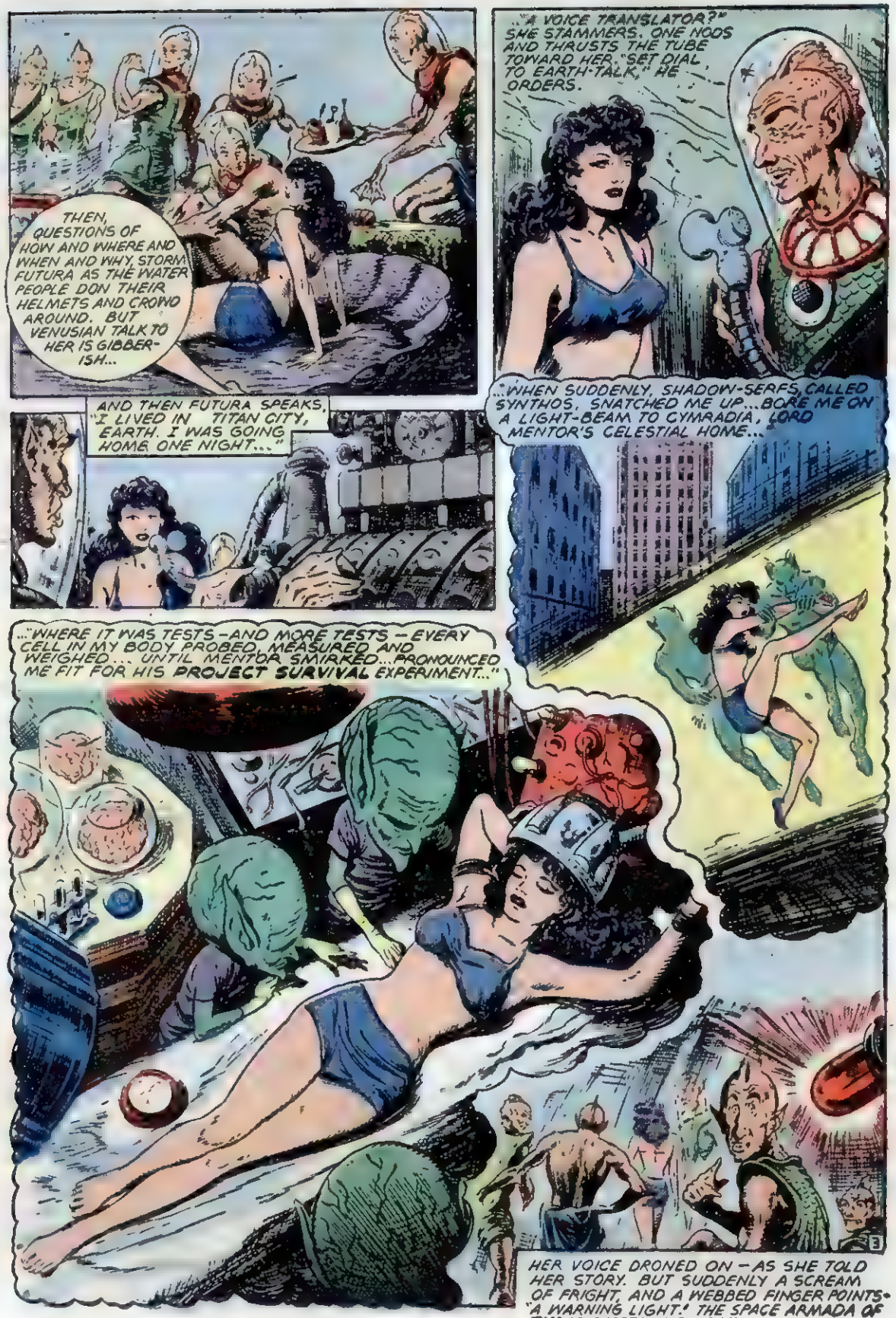
SUDDENLY, A VIOLENT INTERRUPTION. "SEE!" THE LOOKOUT SCREAMS. "ESCAPE CAPSULE CROSSES OUR PATH — AND INSIDE — AN EARTHGIRL!"

INSTANTLY, THE RUNAWAYS CROWD THE VIDEO — THEN DEEP SIGHS AS LONG FORGOTTEN YEARNINGS STIR WITHIN THE WATCHERS' BREASTS. "WE MUST SAVE HER!" ONE GASPS — AND NONE ABOARD DISSENTS.

AND LONG MINUTES LATER, CRIES OF JOY. "SHE LIVES! HER BODY WILL TEACH US HOW TO BREATHE!" THEN FUTURA STIRS, STRETCHES LONG-NUMBED LIMBS, AND STARES ABOUT HER.

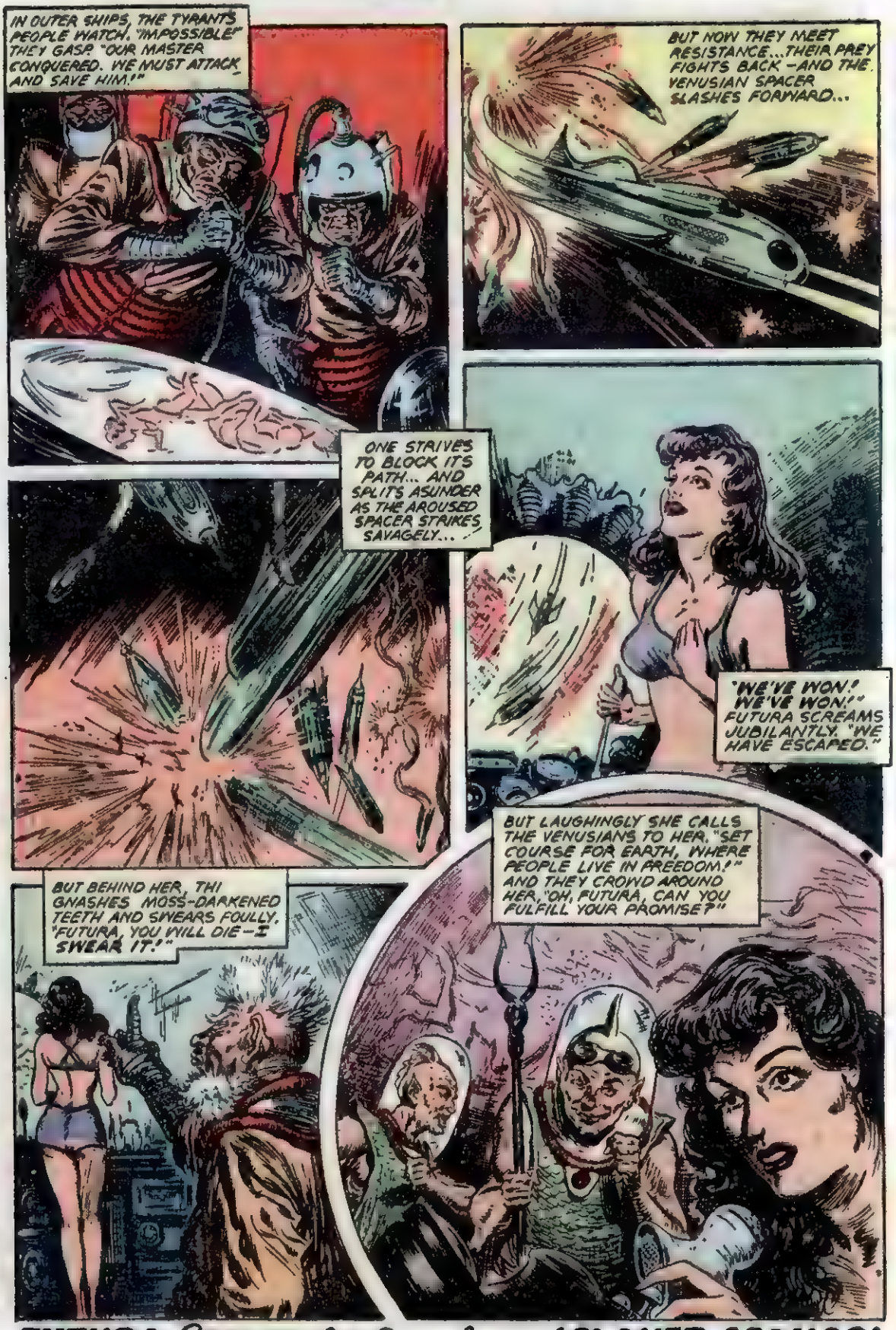
"STAND BY PORT LOADING HATCH," THE CAPTAIN CHANTS, "HOLD BEAM STEADY — AND WHEN SHE COMES ABOARD, STOW HER IN THE AIR RECEPTACLE!"



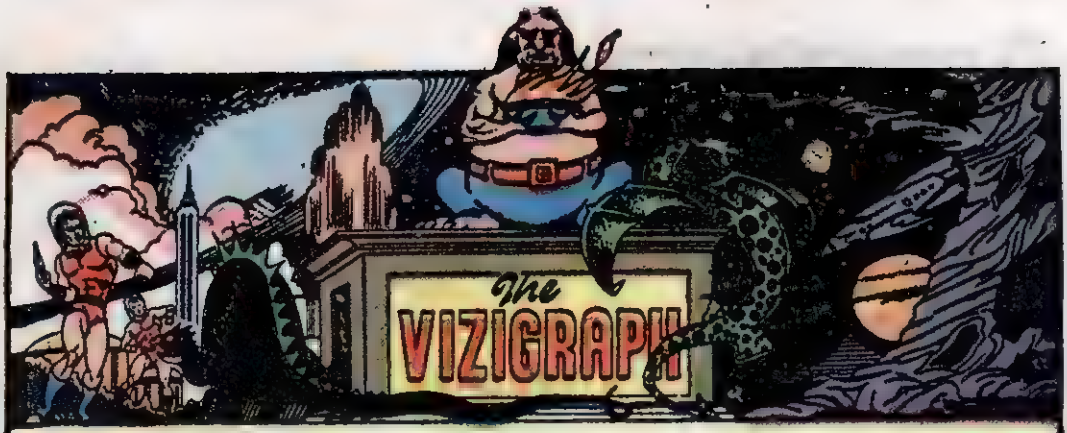

THEN, QUESTIONS OF HOW AND WHERE AND WHEN AND WHY STORM FUTURA AS THE WATER PEOPLE DON THEIR HELMETS AND CROWD AROUND. BUT VENUSIAN TALK TO HER IS GIBBERISH...
"A VOICE TRANSLATOR?" SHE STAMMERS. ONE NODS AND THRUSTS THE TUBE TOWARD HER. "SET DIAL TO EARTH-TALK," HE ORDERS.
AND THEN FUTURA SPEAKS, "I LIVED IN TITAN CITY, EARTH. I WAS GOING HOME ONE NIGHT..."
"...WHEN SUDDENLY, SHADOW-SERFS, CALLED SYNTHOS, SNATCHED ME UP...BORE ME ON A LIGHT-BEAM TO CYMRADIA, LORD MENTOR'S CELESTIAL HOME...
"...WHERE IT WAS TESTS—AND MORE TESTS—EVERY CELL IN MY BODY PROBED, MEASURED AND WEIGHED... UNTIL MENTOR SMIRKED...PRONOUNCED ME FIT FOR HIS PROJECT SURVIVAL EXPERIMENT..."
HER VOICE DRONED ON—AS SHE TOLD HER STORY. BUT SUDDENLY A SCREAM OF FRIGHT, AND A WEBBED FINGER POINTS. "A WARNING LIGHT! THE SPACE ARMADA OF THU IS OVERTAKING US!"
3

AS... A MIGHTY ROAR OF TRIUMPH RESOUNDS THE TYRANT-RULER'S SPACER. "I WANT THEM ALIVE, I WANT TO RIP AND TEAR THEIR SCALY, SLIMY BODIES!
THEN SWOOPING DOWN, DE-MAGNO RAYS GRIP THE VENUSIAN SHIP. IT SLOWS — IT STOPS!
"THEY ARE OURS!" THI SHOUTS — "UNLOCK BOARDING HATCHES FOLLOW ME — I GO TO FLAIL THE SNIVELING WRETCHES!"
WHILE THE VENUSIANS TREMBLE, WHITE-GILLED, "BACK TO SLAVERY WE GO." ONE WHIMPERS.
"NO! NO! RATHER WILL I BACKFIRE THE ROCKETS AND KILL US ALL. YES, THAT IS BEST!" ANOTHER SHOUTS.
FUTURA LEAPS BESIDES HIM, "COWARDS!" SHE TAUNTS, "STOP I WILL NOT HAVE IT!"
4

BUT SOON, THE TYRANT STRUTS INTO THEIR SHIP, "AH, MY LITTLE LAMBS," HE PURRS, "YOU STRAY FAR FROM MY FOLD. I MISSED YOU ALL SO MUCH — SO VERY MUCH!"
THE LEERING FACE TURNS RAGE-CRIMSON, "MY STING RAY WHIP," HE SCREAMS, "LET YOUR FILTHY BODIES DRINK ITS FURY!"
AN AMAZED FUTURA HEARS, TENSES — SPRINGS! HER SLENDER FINGERS CLUTCH AND CLING — HER BODY BALANCES DELICATELY AND BONES SNAP SHARPLY...
...PAIN-SCREAMS AND WONDER-GASPS — THE TYRANT'S BODY TWISTS AND TWIRLS LIKE PUTTY IN FUTURA'S CLUTCHES... THEN THUDS FLOORWARD!
WICKED MINIONS LURCH TO STOP HER...SHE TURNS AND WITH THE STING-RAY GREETS THEM, "YOUR MASTER'S MEDICINE," SHE CHORTLES.
"YOU RUTHLESS, FEARLESS — YOU A TYRANT," FUTURA SNEERS, "WHY YOU ARE A WEAKLING-A SOFT DULL FOOL!" THEN ORDERS SHE SNAPS TO THE VENUSIANS, "MAN THE CANNON — WE'LL BLAST OUR WAY TO FREEDOM!"
5


IN OUTER SHIPS, THE TYRANTS' PEOPLE WATCH. "IMPOSSIBLE" THEY GASP. "OUR MASTER CONQUERED. WE MUST ATTACK AND SAVE HIM!"
BUT NOW THEY MEET RESISTANCE...THEIR PREY FIGHTS BACK—AND THE VENUSIAN SPACER SLASHES FORWARD...
ONE STRIVES TO BLOCK ITS PATH... AND SPLITS ASUNDER AS THE AROUSED SPACER STRIKES SAVAGELY...
"WE'VE WON! WE'VE WON!" FUTURA SCREAMS JUBILANTLY. "WE HAVE ESCAPED."
BUT LAUGHINGLY SHE CALLS THE VENUSIANS TO HER. "SET COURSE FOR EARTH, WHERE PEOPLE LIVE IN FREEDOM!" AND THEY CROWD AROUND HER. "OH, FUTURA, CAN YOU FULFILL YOUR PROMISE?"
BUT BEHIND HER, THI GNASHES MOSS-DARKENED TEETH AND SWEARS FOULLY. "FUTURA, YOU WILL DIE—I SWEAR IT!"

FUTURA *Appears In Every Issue of* **PLANET COMICS!**



Dear Editor:

After reading, month after month, the numerous letters in the Vizigraph section, I find that the main topic of conversation is to find fault, in one way or another, with the magazine. Not to be different, but more to the point, I wish to put on record my only complaint—not enough reading material in your comic book. Why not increase the size, or put out a special quarterly "Giant" issue?

As to what comic characters I prefer, it would be hard to decide, 'cause I like them all, each and every one—even the "evil" ones.

Please keep up the work, and may your book prosper for years to come! It is truly "The Magazine of the Future."

As ever,
Jim Cummings
Balboa, Canal Zone

Dear Editor:

I do not rate myself as a good critic of magazines as some people do, but I do know good reading when I see it.

I read your magazines and especially the Vizigraph with much enjoyment. I have few complaints except that all I ever read in the Vizigraph is sarcastic stuff and big words from critics.

Why don't you start printing for your magazine instead of against it?

I like all the stories in the book, especially Mysta.

Sincerely,
Joan Childs
Baldwin Park, Cal.

Dear Mr. Herrick:

I don't mean to be a "wet blanket," but in your article, "A Day in the Life of the Planets," you say that the planet Saturn has ten moons. Being somewhat of an amateur astronomer, I thought that this isn't quite right. So, I looked up a book called, "The Solar System" by Walter Barthy, Professor of Astronomy, University of Chicago, and sure enough the fact is that Saturn has only nine moons.

Because yours is the only magazine I read, I hope you won't mind a little honest criticism.

Yours truly,
Walther G. Langloh
Norfolk, Va.

Dear Walther:

The tenth moon of Saturn is Themis, discovered by W. H. Pickering in 1904. It was observed only a few times and then apparently disappeared, never to be seen again by human eyes! But we suspect that it still lurks in the mystery rings about Saturn, hidden and forbidding. Perhaps the wing creatures of Saturn use it as a dread place of exile for space criminals!

Sincerely,
Thorncliffe Herrick

Dear Editor:

As I gaze into my crystal ball, I see Ye Olde Comics coming into view. Believe me, I have been doing this for quite a few years now!

EEK!

I noticed that a few hundred of our readers have been kicking because Mysta has not had any love scenes yet. Well, I think they're right. There should be some love in her story, but PLEASE, do not let her fall in love with Bron.

Outside of all this, I think your book is one of the most modern and up-to-date books on the newsstands.

Sincerely yours,
Russell Douglas
Newport News, Va.

Hey Kids!

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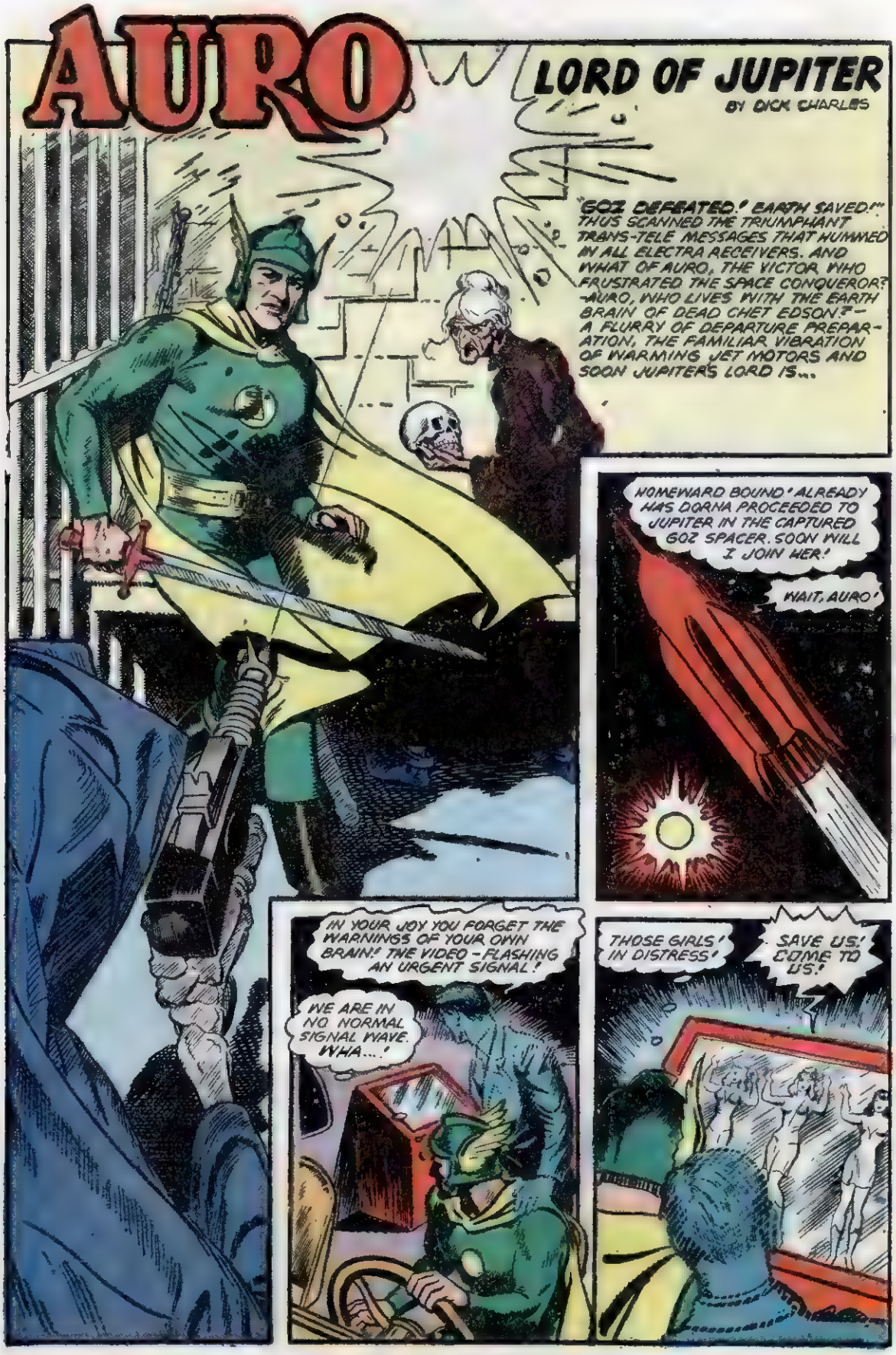
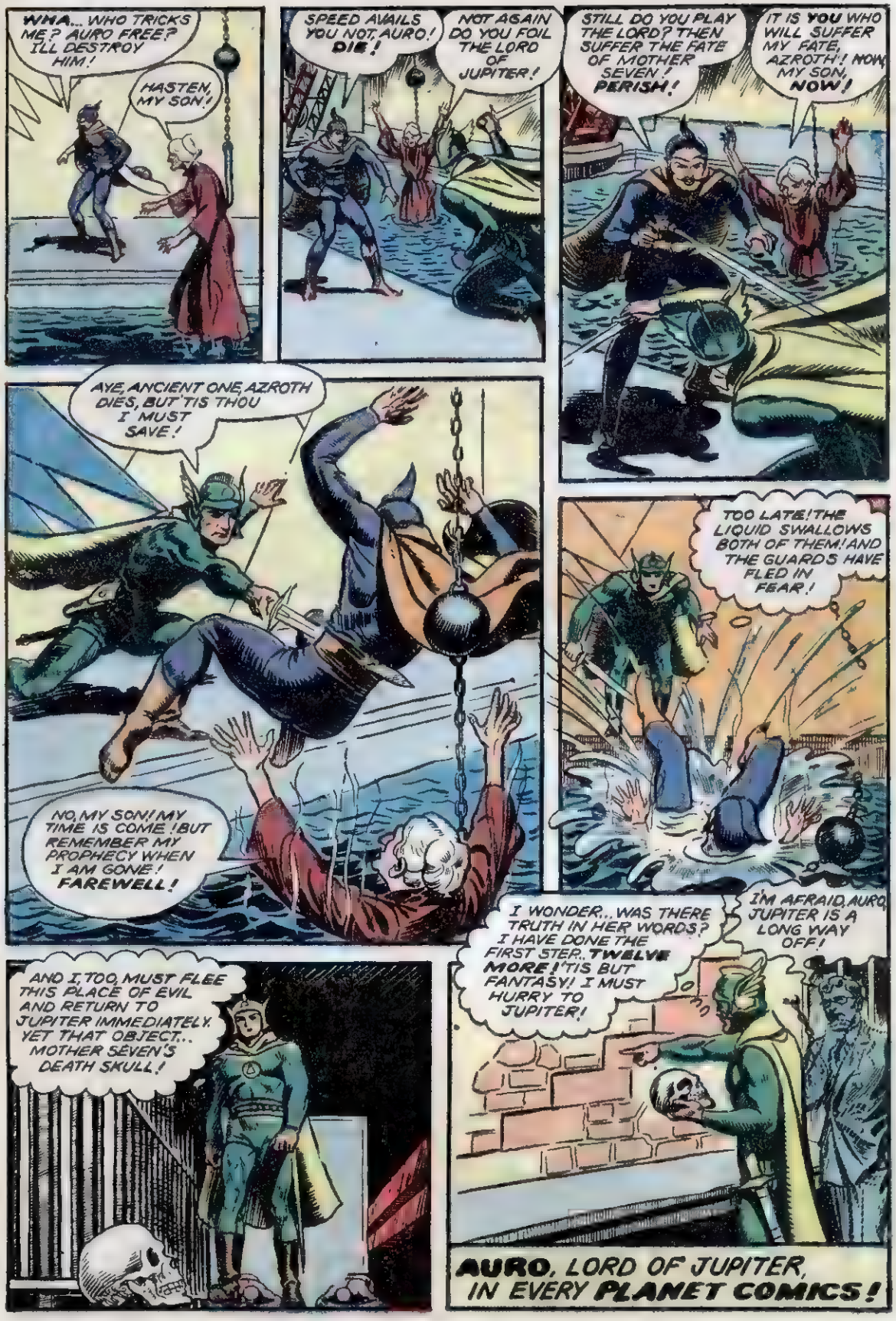

AURO
LORD OF JUPITER
BY DICK CHARLES
"GOZ DEFEATED! EARTH SAVED!" THUS SCANNED THE TRIUMPHANT TRANS-TELE MESSAGES THAT HUMMED IN ALL ELECTRA RECEIVERS. AND WHAT OF AURO, THE VICTOR, WHO FRUSTRATED THE SPACE CONQUEROR? -AURO, WHO LIVES WITH THE EARTH BRAIN OF DEAD CHET EDSON? - A FLURRY OF DEPARTURE PREPARATION, THE FAMILIAR VIBRATION OF WARMING JET MOTORS AND SOON JUPITER'S LORD IS...
HOMEWARD BOUND! ALREADY HAS DORNA PROCEEDED TO JUPITER IN THE CAPTURED GOZ SPACER. SOON WILL I JOIN HER!
WAIT, AURO!
IN YOUR JOY YOU FORGET THE WARNINGS OF YOUR OWN BRAIN! THE VIDEO - FLASHING AN URGENT SIGNAL!
WE ARE IN NO NORMAL SIGNAL WAVE. WHA....!
THOSE GIRLS! IN DISTRESS!
SAVE US! COME TO US!

COME! COME!
THEIR VOICES! SOMEHOW UNREAL. YET THEY PLEAD FOR AID. I MUST HELP THEM!
BEWARE, AURO! THOSE HYPNOTIZING SOUNDS MAY BE A TRAP! GO ON TO JUPITER!
I MUST AID THEM! I MUST!
THE CALL SIGN IS FROM ASTRA LOCATION X-YW. I WILL GUIDE THE SPACER THERE!
NO! WE ARE IN A BELT OF OUT-LAW PLANETOIDS! STOP!
AS...
YOU PERFORM WELL, MY SLAVE SIRENS! YOUR PLEADING DRAWS YET ANOTHER VICTIM INTO THE NET OF YOUR MASTER, AZROTH! GO NOW!
SHALL WE PREPARE THEM FOR THE ATO TREATMENT, GREAT AZROTH?
AYE, GUARDS! BUT THE SPACER NEARS! I MUST PREPARE A RECEPTION!
THIS NEW ADDITION TO THE HORDES OF THE MASTER SLAVER MUST NOT ESCAPE, AFTER HE HAS BEEN LURED THIS FAR. THE CLAW LEVER...
THERE! THE MAGNETO FINGERS WILL CLUTCH THE INQUISITIVE SPACER AND CRUSH IT, WHILE I SEIZE ITS PASSENGER FOR A MORE TERRIBLE FATE! HOLD! IT COMES!
2

AURO! WE'RE BEING DRAWN TOWARD THAT METAL HAND! THIS IS A TRAP!
I MUST ALTER GUIDE FLAPS! 'TIS DONE!
NOT ENOUGH! THE CLAW PIERCES THE SPACER'S SHELL! OUT OF CONTROL!
BAH! THE FOOL THINKS HE CAN ESCAPE! ATTACK GUARDS! AZROTH COMMANDS IT! SEIZE HIM!
NAY! NOT SO EASILY IS AURO, LORD OF JUPITER, TAKEN! DIE, SPACE FIENDS!
LORD, IS IT? THEN TASTE MY BLADE FIRE AND LEARN HOW AZROTH TURNS LORDS INTO SLAVES!
AH, AURO! YOUR BRAIN CANNOT HELP YOU NOW!
HAH! HE STRUGGLES AS DID MOTHER SEVEN WHEN I SEIZED HER AND ALL HER SECRETS! THROW HIM IN THE CELL NEXT TO HERS. THEY ARE A LIKE PAIR!
A SEARING SHOCK OF BLAST RAYS AND THEN THE HEAVY BLACK FOG OF UNCONSCIOUSNESS. SLOWLY, SLOWLY REALITY COMES AGAIN TO AURO. BUT WHERE IS HE? SORE MUSCLES, AN ACHING HEAD, A DANK CELL, YES.. BUT WHO'S IS THAT FACE, OLD, IMMEASURABLY OLD, THAT STARES DOWN AT HIM WITH EYES AS AGELESS AS TIME AND THE STARS?
WAKE, MY SON! COME HEAR THE WORDS OF MOTHER SEVEN! I HAVE BEEN EXPECTING YOU!
ME? H-HOW? YOU KNOW NOT WHO I AM!
YOU ARE THE ONE CALLED AURO AND YOU SEEK THE LAND WHENCE YOU CAME! BUT LONG, LONG WILL BE YOUR PATH ERE JUPITER WELCOMES YOU, MY SON!
HOW KNOW YOU THIS? WHO ARE YOU?

NO MORTAL KNOWS, YET ONCE WERE THESE HALLS AND THEIR SECRETS MINE. THE EVIL HANDS OF AZROTH DID SEIZE THEM...YET, NO MATTER! 'TIS YOUR HANDS OF JUSTICE I MUST GUIDE.
SHE IS SOME SORT OF PROPHETESS, AURO! LISTEN!
WHAT WOULD YE TELL ME, MOTHER?
THE FUTURE, MY SON! BEHOLD YE THE WALL AND HOW THE STONES ASCEND AS STEPS!
COUNT AND YOU WILL FIND 13 STEPS! AS THIS SKULL I HOLD IN MY HANDS, DEATH LURKS ON EACH! THOSE STEPS YOU MUST CLIMB TO REACH JUPITER! KNOW THAT YE STAND ON THE FIRST STEP NOW!
TO CLIMB HIGHER YOU MUST DESTROY AZROTH! THE CLUE RESTS WITHIN THOSE TINY CELLS ON THE FAR WALL!
BUT HOW? I-I DO NOT UNDERSTAND!
WHILE
AURO SAFE IN HIS CELL! NOW AM I READY TO GIVE ATO TREATMENT TO THE SLAVE SIRENS!
THEY ARE ATTACHED TO THE HOIST, GREAT AZROTH! THE DISINTEGR
VAT IS PREPARED!
THEN LOWER MY PRETTIES INTO THE SHRINKING FLUID. HAH! A FORMULA I STOLE FROM MOTHER SEVEN AND TURNED TO MY OWN DEVICES! GOOD! ALREADY THEIR BODIES SHRIVEL!
AAHHH!
DID IT PAIN, MY BEAUTY? YET MAKING YOU SMALL ENABLES ME TO STORE THOUSANDS OF SLAVES IN THESE CELL BOXES, TILL THEY ARE PURCHASED IN THE SPACE MARKETS! NOW BRING ME MOTHER SEVEN!
4

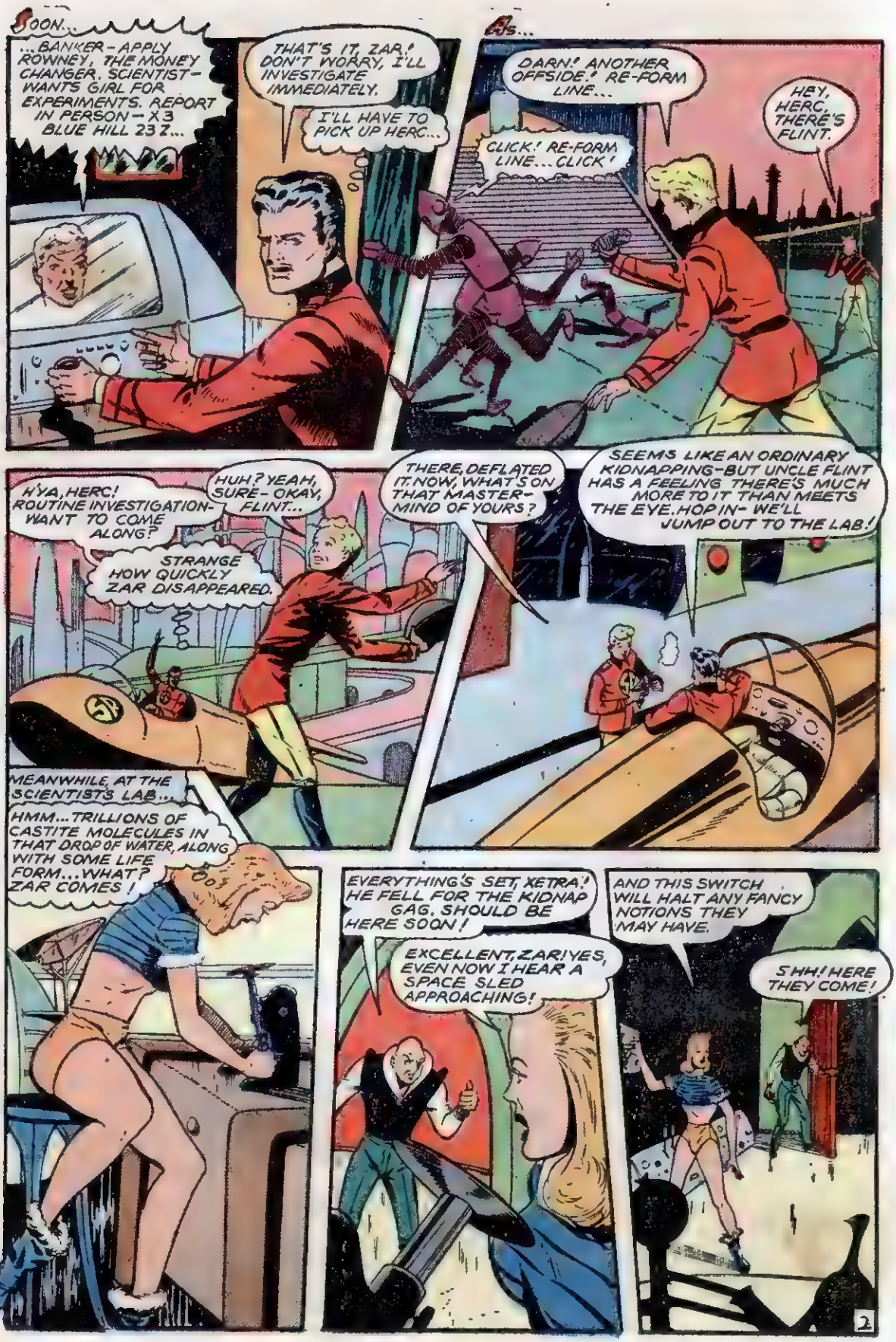
SOON...
THEY SEIZED THAT HELPLESS OLD WOMAN! THEY'LL KILL HER!
FEAR NOT, MY SON! REMEMBER ONLY MY WORDS!
THE ONE PERSON WHO WANTED TO AID ME – GONE! AND NO WAY OUT OF THIS PRISON!
THERE IS, AURO! HER WORDS ABOUT THE CELLS ON THE FAR WALL!
THE CLUE! I MUST LEARN WHAT THE CELL BOXES CONTAIN! THIS SKULL...
PERHAPS I MAY SMASH THOSE TINY COMPARTMENTS AND SOLVE THE MYSTERY OF THAT ANCIENT ONE'S WORDS!
THE TINKLE OF SHATTERING PLASTA GLASS – HIGH, PIPING VOICE SOUNDS – AND SOON, MINIATURE FORMS TUMBLE FORWARD...
AS...
UNBELIEVABLE! SO THIS IS THE DEVILTRY AZROTH WORKS! YET THEY FREE ME! THEY UNLOOSE THE LOCK MECHANISM!
YOU ARE NO LONGER OF WORTH TO ME, MOTHER SEVEN! YOU ARE GOING TO DIE!
HEH, HEH, HEH! YOU GLOAT TOO SOON, AZROTH! MY DEATH BUT SEALS YOUR OWN DOOM! BEHOLD!
5


WHA... WHO TRICKS ME? AURO FREE? I'LL DESTROY HIM!
HASTEN, MY SON!
SPEED AVAILS YOU NOT, AURO! DIE!
NOT AGAIN DO YOU FOIL THE LORD OF JUPITER!
STILL DO YOU PLAY THE LORD? THEN SUFFER THE FATE OF MOTHER SEVEN! PERISH!
IT IS YOU WHO WILL SUFFER MY FATE, AZROTH! NOW, MY SON, NOW!
AYE, ANCIENT ONE, AZROTH DIES, BUT 'TIS THOU I MUST SAVE!
NO, MY SON! MY TIME IS COME! BUT REMEMBER MY PROPHECY WHEN I AM GONE! FAREWELL!
TOO LATE! THE LIQUID SWALLOWS BOTH OF THEM! AND THE GUARDS HAVE FLED IN FEAR!
AND I, TOO, MUST FLEE THIS PLACE OF EVIL AND RETURN TO JUPITER IMMEDIATELY. YET THAT OBJECT... MOTHER SEVEN'S DEATH SKULL!
I WONDER... WAS THERE TRUTH IN HER WORDS? I HAVE DONE THE FIRST STEP.. TWELVE MORE! 'TIS BUT FANTASY! I MUST HURRY TO JUPITER!
I'M AFRAID, AURO, JUPITER IS A LONG WAY OFF!
AURO, LORD OF JUPITER, IN EVERY PLANET COMICS!

SPACE RANGERS

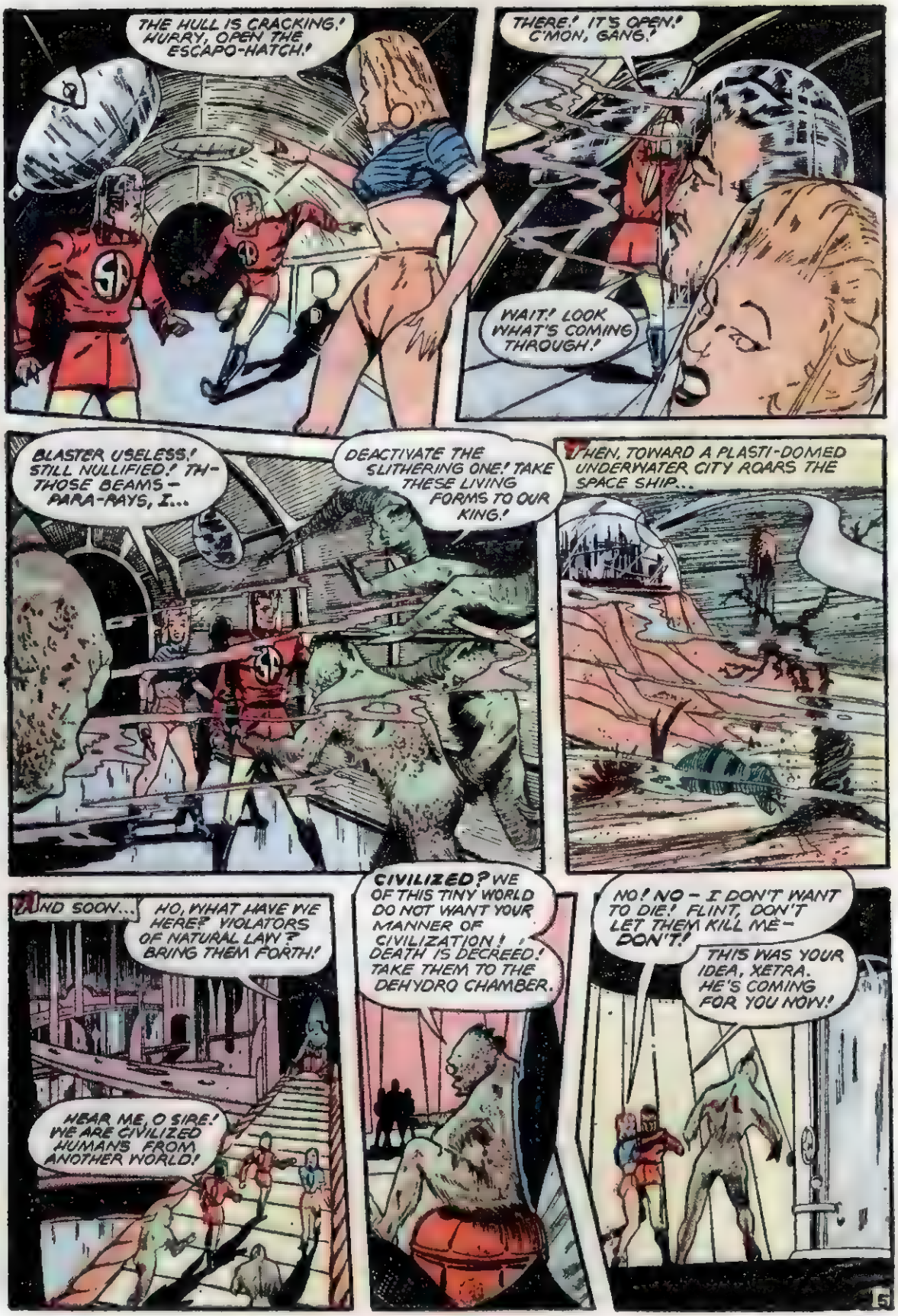
by HUGH FITZHUGH

A FRENZIED MAN STAGGERED INTO SPACE RANGERS HEADQUARTERS, SAID HIS NAME WAS ZAR. HIS FRANTIC, MOVING LIPS WHISPERED: "FLINT BAKER! MUST SEE FLINT BAKER!" AND SOON, AS HE STOOD SHAKING BEFORE THE MASTER SLEUTH OF TERRA, HIS SAD TALE SPILLED OUT...
DAUGHTER KIDNAPPED? BUT WHEN DID YOU SEE HER LAST?
YESTERDAY—SHE WENT TO ANSWER A VIDEO JOB WANT AD, AND...
I CAN MAKE A PLAYBACK OF YESTERDAY'S WANT ADS—KNOW WHICH ONE?
YES, ER, A SCIENTIST OF SOME KIND...


SOON...
...BANKER - APPLY ROWNEY, THE MONEY CHANGER. SCIENTIST - WANTS GIRL FOR EXPERIMENTS. REPORT IN PERSON - X3 BLUE HILL 237...
THAT'S IT, ZAR! DON'T WORRY, I'LL INVESTIGATE IMMEDIATELY.
I'LL HAVE TO PICK UP HERC...
AS...
DARN! ANOTHER OFFSIDE! RE-FORM LINE...
CLICK! RE-FORM LINE... CLICK!
HEY, HERC, THERE'S FLINT.
H'YA, HERC! ROUTINE INVESTIGATION - WANT TO COME ALONG?
HUH? YEAH, SURE - OKAY, FLINT...
STRANGE HOW QUICKLY ZAR DISAPPEARED.
THERE, DEFLATED IT. NOW, WHAT'S ON THAT MASTER-MIND OF YOURS?
SEEMS LIKE AN ORDINARY KIDNAPPING - BUT UNCLE FLINT HAS A FEELING THERE'S MUCH MORE TO IT THAN MEETS THE EYE. HOP IN - WE'LL JUMP OUT TO THE LAB!
MEANWHILE, AT THE SCIENTIST'S LAB...
HMM... TRILLIONS OF CASTITE MOLECULES IN THAT DROP OF WATER, ALONG WITH SOME LIFE FORM... WHAT? ZAR COMES!
EVERYTHING'S SET, XETRA! HE FELL FOR THE KIDNAP GAG, SHOULD BE HERE SOON!
EXCELLENT, ZAR! YES, EVEN NOW I HEAR A SPACE SLED APPROACHING!
AND THIS SWITCH WILL HALT ANY FANCY NOTIONS THEY MAY HAVE.
SHH! HERE THEY COME!
2

FLINT, IT'S A TRAP! THAT'S XETRA - SHE WAS BANNED FROM THE SCIENCE SCHOOL!
SMART BOY - BUT I'VE NULLIFIED YOUR BLASTER, BAKER! QUICKLY, ZAR - COME WITH YOUR SPECIAL RAY GUN...
WHAT!" ZAR - THEN THIS WAS ALL A TRICK?
YES, JUST TO GET YOU HERE...
AS YOU KNOW, I WAS BANNED BECAUSE OF ILLEGAL EXPERIMENTS IN REDUCING MATTER. COME TO MY MICROSCOPE!
BUT WHY DO YOU NEED ME?
I NEED YOUR SUPERIOR KNOWLEDGE OF OBTUSE ANGLES TO ENTER THAT DROP OF WATER! ZAR, TAKE THEM TO THE REDUCTO CHAMBER!
GET MOVING, YOU TWO!
WHY, IT'S A SPACESHIP HANGAR!
YES - YES! CLIMB ABOARD! HURRY!
REMEMBER, REDUCTO PRESSURE FOR ONE SIXTY-MIN UNIT - THEN RETURN TO NORM, SO I CAN RETURN WITH THE CASTITE LOOT - ALONE!
LISTEN TO HER, FLINT! SHE'S GONNA GIVE US THE SHAKE!
SHH, HERC - WE'LL PLAY BALL WITH HER.
SOON, AS GIANT SUPER DYNOS WHIR ...
ZAR'S STARTED THE PROCESS! TO THE CONTROLS, BAKER, QUICKLY!
3

STRANGE SENSATIONS, REDUCTO CHAMBER FILLED WITH SOUNDS FROM THE HUMMING MACHINE, AND SOON, AFTER ONE TEN-MIN UNIT HAS PASSED, ZAR STARES AMAZED AT THE TINY SPACE SHIP...
THE REDUCTION PROCESS WORKS! THEY'RE MOVING-TAKING OFF!
SET THE COURSE ON ANGLE F CO-ORDINATE! WE SHOULD BE NEARING THE DROP OF WATER!
THE DROP OF WATER? LOOK-IT'S A WHOLE OCEAN!
TRUE, THE DROP HAS BECOME A VAST ENDLESS SEA TO US! SET DIVE PRESSURE!
AND WITH A HISSING ROAR, THE SPACER PLUNGES INTO THE SURGING WAVES...
GOOD THING I PREPARED FOR UNDERWATER WORK-BUT LOOK!
VAH! INTRUDERS! ELECTRO-ACTIVATE THE SLITHERING ONE!
STRANGE BEAST STIRRING-BAKER! BAKER! IT-IT'S COMING TOWARD US!!
I'M TRYING TO VEER OFF, BUT..
TOO LATE! QUICKLY, OXY-HELMETS!
4


THE HULL IS CRACKING! HURRY, OPEN THE ESCAPO-HATCH!
THERE! IT'S OPEN! C'MON, GANG!
WAIT! LOOK WHAT'S COMING THROUGH!
BLASTER USELESS! STILL NULLIFIED! TH- THOSE BEAMS - PARA-RAYS, I...
DEACTIVATE THE SLITHERING ONE! TAKE THESE LIVING FORMS TO OUR KING!
THEN, TOWARD A PLASTI-DOMED UNDERWATER CITY ROARS THE SPACE SHIP...
AND SOON...
HO, WHAT HAVE WE HERE? VIOLATORS OF NATURAL LAW? BRING THEM FORTH!
HEAR ME, O SIRE! WE ARE CIVILIZED HUMANS FROM ANOTHER WORLD!
CIVILIZED? WE OF THIS TINY WORLD DO NOT WANT YOUR MANNER OF CIVILIZATION! DEATH IS DECREED! TAKE THEM TO THE DEHYDRO CHAMBER.
NO! NO - I DON'T WANT TO DIE! FLINT, DON'T LET THEM KILL ME - DON'T!
THIS WAS YOUR IDEA, XETRA. HE'S COMING FOR YOU NOW!
15

HERC, IF WE COULD STALL AND GET BACK TO THE SHIP, ZAR REVERSES POWER IN A SCANT TEN-MIN UNITS! SAY, WHAT'RE YOU DOING?
THIS FOOTBALL, FLINT!
LUCKY I BROUGHT IT, ALONG WITH THIS GAS CAPSULE. BUT LOOK, THEY'VE TURNED THE SWITCH ON!
HELP! I'M BURNING... I—
AAAHHH!
NOW! WHILE THEIR ATTENTIONS ARE RIVETED ON REMOVING XETRA...
OKAY, FLINT HOW LONG HAVE WE GOT?
TWO MIN UNITS! THIS WAY, HURRY!
SCUFFLE OF FEET DOWN THE DANK PASSAGE, SHIP SIGHTED— THEN THE LOUD CLANG AS THE HATCH DOOR CLOSES. SOON, THE WHIRRING HUM— A SHORT FLIGHT BACK INTO THE CHAMBER AS ZAR APPEARS AT THE SWITCH...
WHAT, WHERE'S XETRA? WHAT HAVE YOU DONE WITH HER?
SHE CAUSED HER OWN DEATH! AND NOW YOU, ZAR, WILL ANSWER TO THE SCIENCE COUNCIL!
SWIFT SEKOS LATER
LOOK, THE WATER DROP IS SPILLING OFF THE MICRO-SCOPE!
GEE, FLINT, THAT EXPLOSION MUSTA REALLY KNOCKED THEM OFFSIDE!
SPACE RANGERS APPEARS IN EVERY ISSUE of PLANET COMICS!

TIME SHOCK

By THORNECLIFFE HERRICK

THE gleaming sleekness of "The Wanderer" had been flitting along its space path as neatly and precisely as an electron in its atom orb when it happened. The pulse of the sudden explosion slammed Captain Daro Thar abruptly to the guide deck of the rocketing super spacer. Carefully he edged his way to the inter-compartment communications video.

"What is it, Doctor? Quick, man! We can't be in the asteroid swarms—I checked the space charts only an hour ago!"

Advisor Doctor Mecklo's voice echoed back slowly, muffled and hesitant. "The "The Time-Warp! Great Tao, Thar, we've smashed the Time-Warp!"

Thar groaned, dug his nails into the plasta sound micro handle. "I'll be right up. Check the X-resistors,. though I guess it's useless. I've got to see the jet engineer—the ship seems to be off its gyro course."

But the slim figure of the first engineer was already in the room before his words had trailed to the old Doctor's ears. "Jet flow has ceased, captain. The electro-generators are as dead as Saturn's third moon! We're drifting in dynofield YX-47."

"Back to earth! That's luck!" Thar breathed with relief. Slowly he walked to the Advisor Doctor's telo-eye cabin. The old man was squinting into the lens-adjuster.

"It's earth all right, Thar! Yes, there's Europe—and yet the land outlines don't seem just right! Do you know, Thar, I have a feeling we're floating back into another era!"

"Not earth's Ice Age, I hope," grinned Thar.

"Decidedly not," reproved the Advisor Doctor. "You know that in that period no such land configuration was possible."

Thar nodded. "Well, whatever it is, we're stuck with it."

"The Wanderer," battered and blast-crinkled, sank into a long, narrow valley hedged in by snow-capped mountains. The jet engineer and his motor men began their work at once.

Thar told off a scouting party, hoping to replenish the spacer's dwindling food supply. "Remember," he warned. "Keep together, and each man adjust his electra-phones for communication with the spacer." The twenty, led by Ato-gunner Hatch, trooped out of the main hatch.

They climbed a gentle slope above a winding river. No man or beast appeared, and the scouts disappeared from Thar's view.

Two hours later a lookout cried out. Men of the scouting party had appeared on the brow of the hill. They were moving fast, as if in retreat. Another appeared, and then two who were helping an injured man. Hatch ran up as Thar swung down from the spacer.

"We were attacked!" he gasped. "By giants! Cavemen!"

Thar and the Advisor Doctor exchanged a glance. "Centuries!" cried the scientist. "The broken Time-Warp has slipped us back centuries of time!"

Thar had been counting heads. "You're two men short," he rapped.

Hatch nodded. "And one man hurt. He was hit by a great boulder thrown by a giant. The others are dead."

"How were they killed? Hit by rocks?"

Hatch's face bore a strange look as he spread his hands. "Nothing hit them. They just dropped after we shot one of the giants. Nothing hit them!"

"Nonsense!" cried Thar, but as he saw the stubborn lines in the Ato-gunner's face he wondered. "Come on, Doctor, you and I will scout."

Quickly he selected six of his most trustworthy men, and the eight followed the tracks of the food hunters. One man sighted a goat, but Thar shook his head. He wanted to see those bodies—the two slain crewmen, and the giant—if they had not been dragged away.

First they found the dead spacemen. The Advisor Doctor studied the unmarked still faces with pursed lips, then bade the men strip both. There was not a mark on them. The Doctor, shuttling his hand through his thinning hair, was silent.

A little farther away lay the giant. His death was no mystery. The ray of a spacerman's pistol had caught him directly in the face.

"We'll pick up our men on the way back," said Thar. "Now for food."

They had caught four goats before the giants appeared. One, the nearest, seemed to be a leader of sorts: He carried a large club, swung on his shoulder above a craggy, scowling face framed with a mat of long hair. His only garment was a bear hide hung off one shoulder and caught at the loins with a piece of bone. He came on slowly, teeth bared, his club balanced for a crushing blow.

Thar gripped his pistol. At that instant another giant leaped from the underbrush to make a flank attack on the party. The menaced spacerman fired his dis-gun. The giant's arms fell, the great body slumped.

And then a startling thing happened. The spacerman beside Thar gave a little sigh and sank to the ground. Thar and the Doctor knelt by him and saw that he was dead.

"Ah!" cried the Doctor, his face working, his eyes shining. "Thar, I—"

The leading giant had paused, astonished by the sudden death of two men. His scowl had left his face, and a thrill coursed through Thar's whole being. Why, this caveman's face resembled his own! His dis-gun wavered from its target as he marveled.

Two giants leaped forward from a fringe of woods. Three dis-guns spat, and they fell. And as if by magic, three of Thar's party slumped and lay still.

"Thar!" cried the little Doctor in anguish. "Stop them! Stop the firing! And don't shoot the big leader!"

"Cease firing!" bellowed Thar. He turned wildly to the Doctor. "He looks like me, that caveman!"

"Of course," babbled the Doctor. "Don't you see? The Time-Warp! These are the First Men! That's why our men died!"

Thar passed a hand over his brow, half lifting his dis-gun as the giants slowly advanced. "You mean—" he cried incredulously.

"Our men shot their own ancestors!" shouted the Doctor. "And so, without ancestors, how could they be alive? They died!"

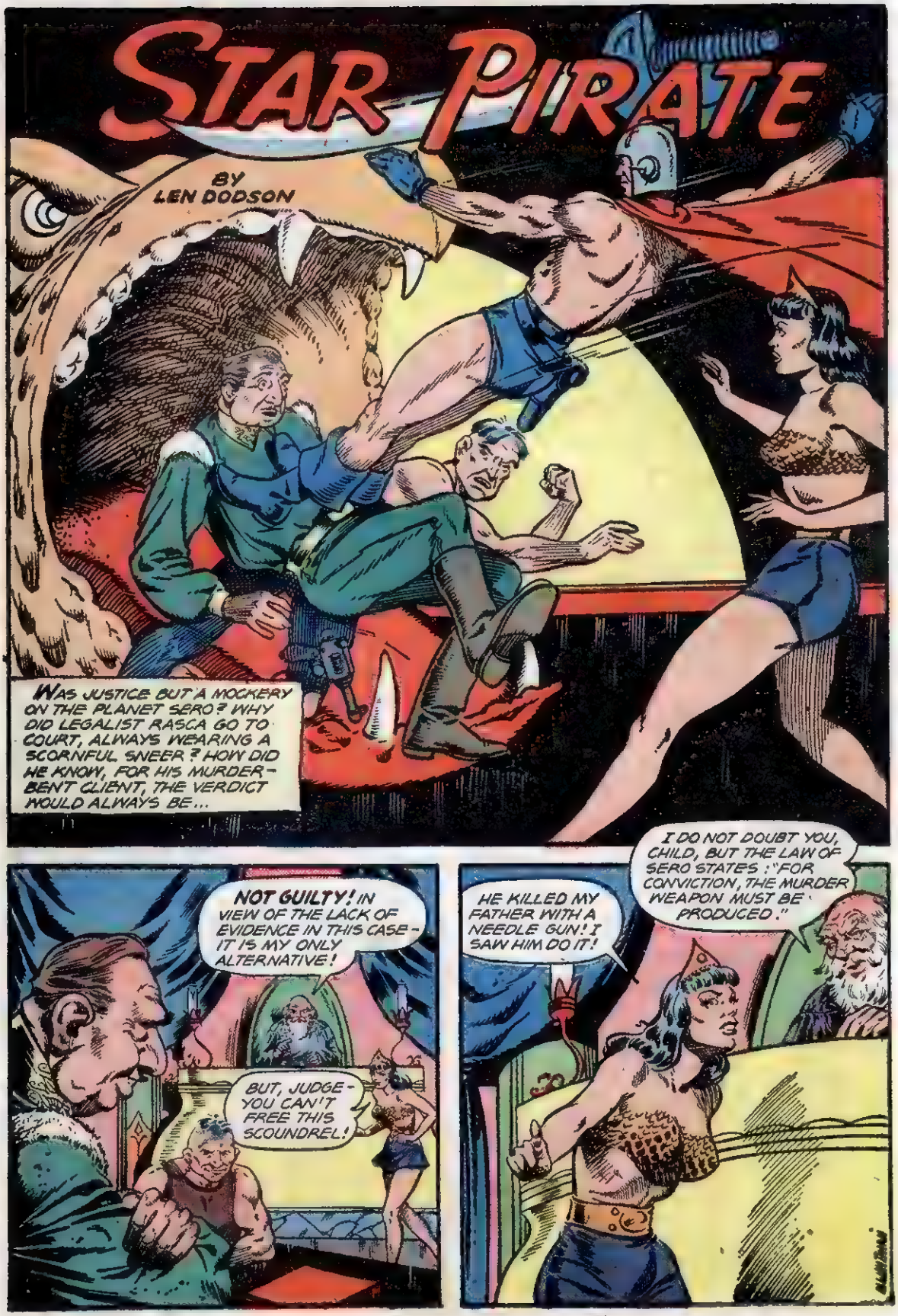
"It's crazy!" cried Thar.

"It's the law of time!" retorted the Advisor Doctor.

"And that big fellow—"

"Is your ancestor!"

Shuddering, Thar holstered his dis-gun. "Fall back!" he commanded his men. They paused only to lift their dead and retreated toward the spacer. Thar looked back. The big leader had stopped, and stood, leaning on his club, staring stupidly after Thar.


STAR PIRATE
BY LEN DODSON
WAS JUSTICE BUT A MOCKERY ON THE PLANET SERO? WHY DID LEGALIST RASCA GO TO COURT, ALWAYS WEARING A SCORNFUL SNEER? HOW DID HE KNOW, FOR HIS MURDER-BENT CLIENT, THE VERDICT WOULD ALWAYS BE...
NOT GUILTY! IN VIEW OF THE LACK OF EVIDENCE IN THIS CASE - IT IS MY ONLY ALTERNATIVE!
BUT, JUDGE - YOU CAN'T FREE THIS SCOUNDREL!
HE KILLED MY FATHER WITH A NEEDLE GUN! I SAW HIM DO IT!
I DO NOT DOUBT YOU, CHILD, BUT THE LAW OF SERO STATES: "FOR CONVICTION, THE MURDER WEAPON MUST BE PRODUCED."

...IS WATCHING...
NO WEAPON HAS THUS FAR BEEN FOUND OR OFFERED AS EVIDENCE - WHEREFORE, CASE DISMISSED!
THEN IT'S UP TO SOMEONE TO LOCATE THOSE MURDER WEAPONS! THEY'RE LAUGHING AT US -
I'M OFFERING ONE THOUSAND CREDITS FOR PROOF THAT SATO KILLED MY FATHER!
HAH! NICE WORK, RASCA - MAYBE WE CAN COLLECT THAT, TOO, EH?
THEY MADE A COMPLETE FOOL OUT OF THAT GAL! OLE STAR ISN'T GOING TO SIT BY IDLY...
IT WOULD BE INTERESTING TO FIND OUT WHERE THEY DUCK THOSE WEAPONS!
VALDA OFFERS A THOUSAND CREDIT REWARD FOR CONVICTION! VIDEO NEWS SIGNING OFF UNTIL 1850.
HMM! THOUSAND CREDIT REWARD... AIN'T EXACTLY PEANUTS! THIS CALLS FER A LITTLE OF OLD BLACKY'S FINESSE.
I WON'T TELL STAR NOTHIN' ABOUT THIS! HA! HE DOESN'T EVEN SEE ME SNEAKIN' OUT! WOTTA DOPE...
WELL, WELL, WHAT DO YOU KNOW - BLACKY'S PLAYING CAT AND MOUSE AGAIN! DOESN'T KNOW I HAVE THIS DETECTO-GRAPH SET TO HIS FREQUENCY! THE OLD FLEA-BAG!
2

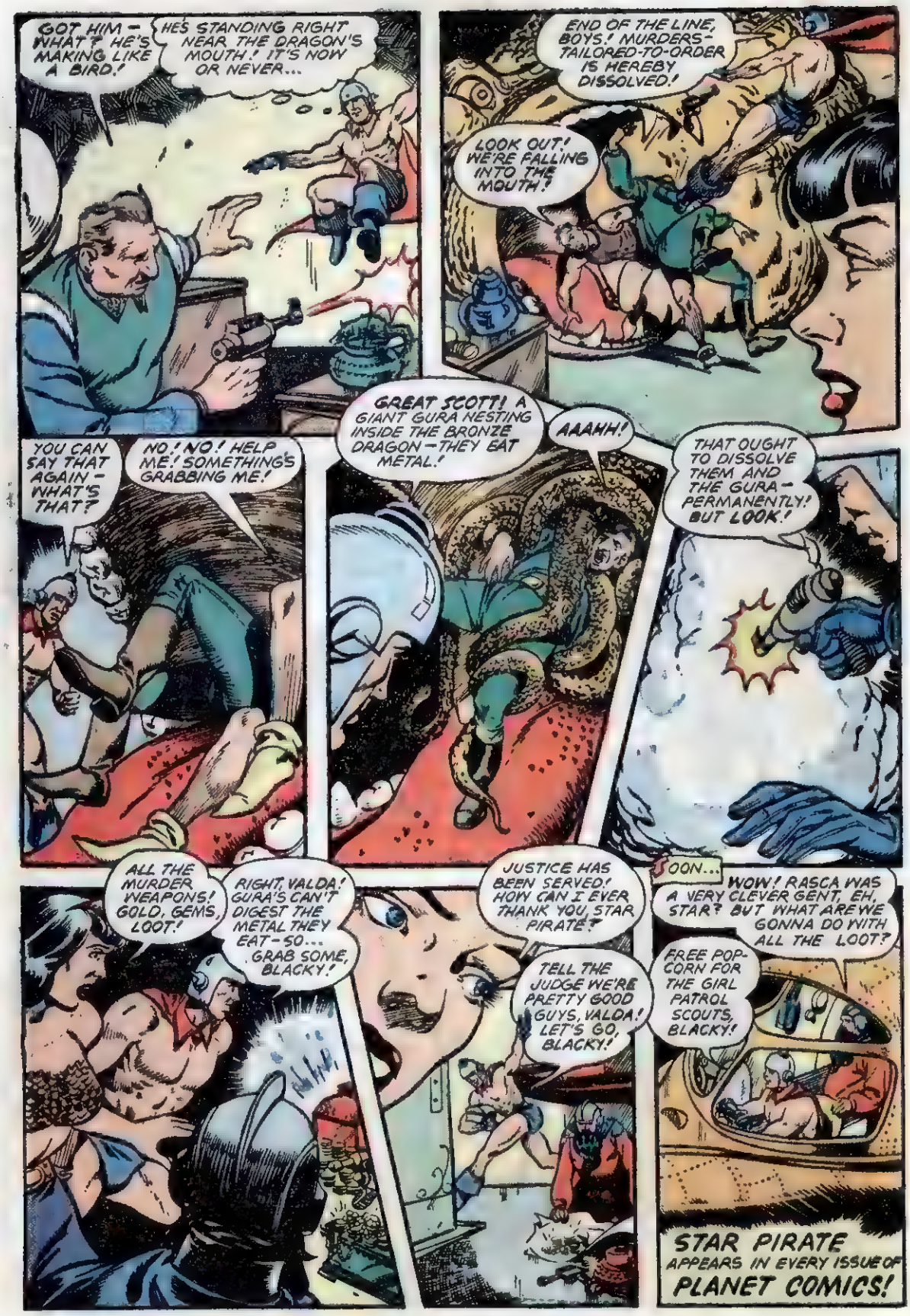
MEANWHILE, AT THE LEGALIST'S NEO-OFFICE...

COME NOW, SATO, I GOT YOU OFF— AS I SAID I WOULD! WHERE'S THE LOOT YOU— TOOK FROM VALDA'S FATHER?
I FOLLOWED YOUR INSTRUCTIONS, RASCA. AFTER I KILLED THE FOOL, I WENT TO THE CURIO SHOP, AS YOU SAID, AND...
"SPOTTED THE BIG BRONZE DRAGON RIGHT AWAY. TOLD THE SHOPKEEPER I WAS JUST BROWSING, BUT WHEN HE LOOKED THE OTHER WAY..."
"...I PLACED THE NEEDLE GUN AND THE LOOT INSIDE THE DRAGON'S MOUTH. IT WAS AMAZING — JUST SEEMED TO MELT, THEN DISAPPEARED!"
IT IS AMAZING, ISN'T IT? CAME FROM THE PLANETS BEHIND THE SUN AND... SAY, THAT'S STRANGE!
WHAT? HEY, IS SOMEBODY BEHIND THAT SCREEN?
YES, YOU MURDERERS! AND I'VE HEARD EVERY WORD YOU SAID!
TOO BAD THERE ARE NO WITNESSES, VALDA, MY DEAR! WHO'S THAT?
A BEARDED BOY LOOKING FOR A REWARD! DON'T REACH FOR THAT BLASTER, RASCA!
UNHAND TH' GAL — C'MERE, VALDA. NOW, RASCA, WHERE YOU HIDIN' THOSE WEAPONS?
IF HE EVER FINDS OUT IT'LL RUIN OUR RACKET...MURDERS— TAILORED-TO-ORDER!
3

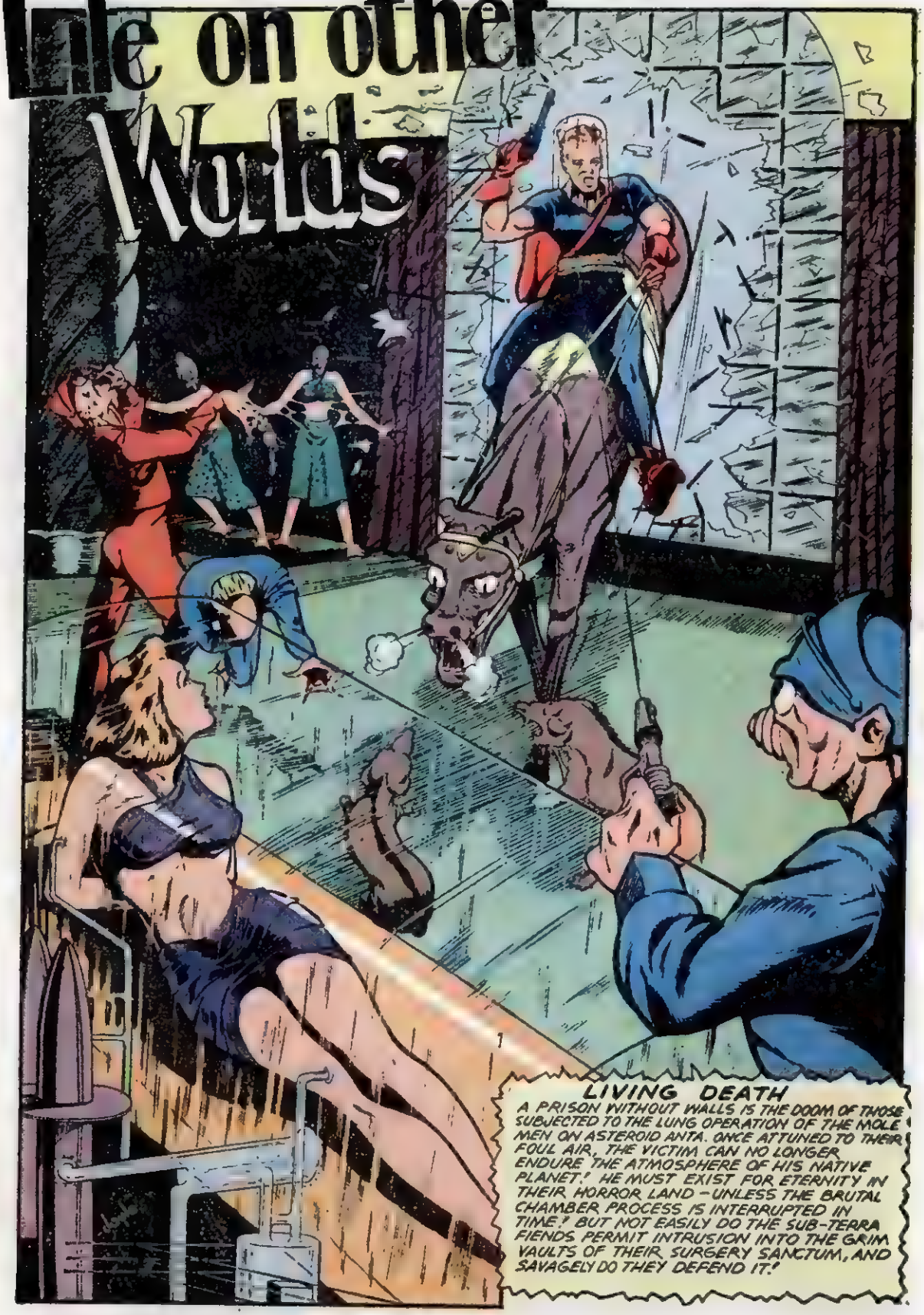
As...
WHAT! BLACKY'S LITTLE SWITCH DIDN'T COME OFF SO WELL —
GOTTA HELP HIM — BUT LET ME THINK... HMM, I'VE GOT AN IDEA...
CRIME IS RAMPANT ON SERO — THESE GUYS ARE MAKING IT TOUGH FOR HONEST PIRATES LIKE BLACKY AND ME — THERE! NOW FOR A LITTLE VISIT TO SOME OF MY UNDERWORLD ACQUAINTANCES!
SOON...
TRYING TO PULL A FAST ONE, HUH? NOW YOU'RE REALLY GOING TO SEE HOW MURDERS-TAILORED-TO-ORDER OPERATES! SATO!
WHAT'S CLICKING IN THAT LEGAL BRAIN O' YOURS, RASCA?
THE PERFECT MURDER! THIS TIME NO WEAPON AND NO BODIES! GET IT?
CLEVER! HEY, SOMEONE'S AT THE MIRRO-SCREEN!
HIDE THOSE TWO, WHILE I SEE WHAT THIS CHUMP WANTS! AH, HE APPEARS... COME ON IN — WHO ARE YOU?
TAL VARR — I'M FROM MARS, LEGALIST RASCA! MY UNDERWORLD PALS SAID YOU'D HELP...
I'VE GOT TO MURDER A MAN — BUT I'M AFRAID THE SPACE POLICE WILL GET ME. HERE ARE MY CREDENTIALS!

YOU COME HIGHLY RECOMMENDED! ER, MY FEE IS FIVE HUNDRED CREDITS PER MURDER - TAILORED-TO-ORDER. GIVE!
THE MAN I WANT TO MURDER IS A SPACE RAT NAMED BLACKY - HE TRIED TO BEAT ME OUT OF A REWARD!
BLACKY, HE SAID! HEY! THAT'S ME! VOICE SOUNDS KINDA FAMILIAR... AH, I GET IT! HE CAN'T SEE ME THROUGH THIS ONE-WAY MIRRO-SCREEN - BUT IF I COULD GET THIS GAG OFF...
THANK YOU, TAL VARR - NOW YOU HAVE YOUR INSTRUCTIONS?
YEAH. I KILL THIS GUY - THEN BRING THE MURDER WEAPON BACK TO YOU! TA! TA!
YES - AND PERHAPS A CUT OF THE REWARD CREDITS, MY FRIEND!
GOT IT!! STAR! STAR! I'M BEHIND THIS SCREEN! HELP!
WHAT? THAT GUY WAS A PHONY! RASCA, STOP HIM! STOP HIM!
THERE - THE STEEL PORTALS WILL LOCK HIM IN THE ANTE-ROOM! COME ON!
I'LL OPEN THE DOOR!
WHAT!! GONE! BUT THAT'S IMPOSSIBLE! HE DIDN'T HAVE TIME TO GET OUT!
YEAH, BUT NO ONE'S HERE, RASCA - AND THERE'S NOTHING HE COULD HIDE BEHIND! IT'S WEIRD...
FOOL BLACKY HAD TO YELL! BUT THESE ANTI-GRAV BOOTS AND MY INVISIBLE HELMET MAKE A PERFECT COMBINATION- OH, THEY'RE GOING BACK IN.
BEAT'S ME, BUT WE'VE GOT TO WORK FAST, SATO! RUSH THOSE TWO INTO MY JET-CAR! WE'VE GOT TO KILL THEM!
5

BUT TRAILING...
I DON'T KNOW HOW HE MANAGED THAT GET-AWAY SWITCH, BUT I MADE SURE NO ONE WAS FOLLOWING US!
HMM... SEEM TO BE HEADING FOR THAT OLD CURIO SHOP.
UNIVERSAL CURIO SHOP— THAT'S IT, SATO! PULL IN.
GET GOING! YOU HANDLE THE SHOPKEEPER, SATO, HE DOESN'T KNOW ANYTHING!
NOW STAND HERE— RIGHT BEFORE THE DRAGON'S MOUTH, AND SAY YOUR PRAYERS! WATCH THAT PROPRIETOR, SATO.
GET OVER THERE, YOU! QUITE AN ARRAY OF CURIOS YOU HAVE. TOO BAD YOU GOTTA LEAVE 'EM... HEY, WHAT WAS THAT?
THAT HELMET! IT MOVED — I SAW IT! FUNNY, IT WASN'T THERE WHEN WE CAME IN! WHAT ARE YOU TRYING TO PULL?
NOTHING! HONEST, I NEVER SAW IT BEFORE!
HMM... THIS BUTTON... THERE, I DID IT — WHAT?
I'LL SAY YOU DID IT—
WHO ARE YOU? OOH!
STAR PIRATE! AND I DON'T LIKE TO HAVE MY PALS PUSHED AROUND, SEE?
RASCA'S GOIN' TO BLAST ME. ONE CHANCE...
6

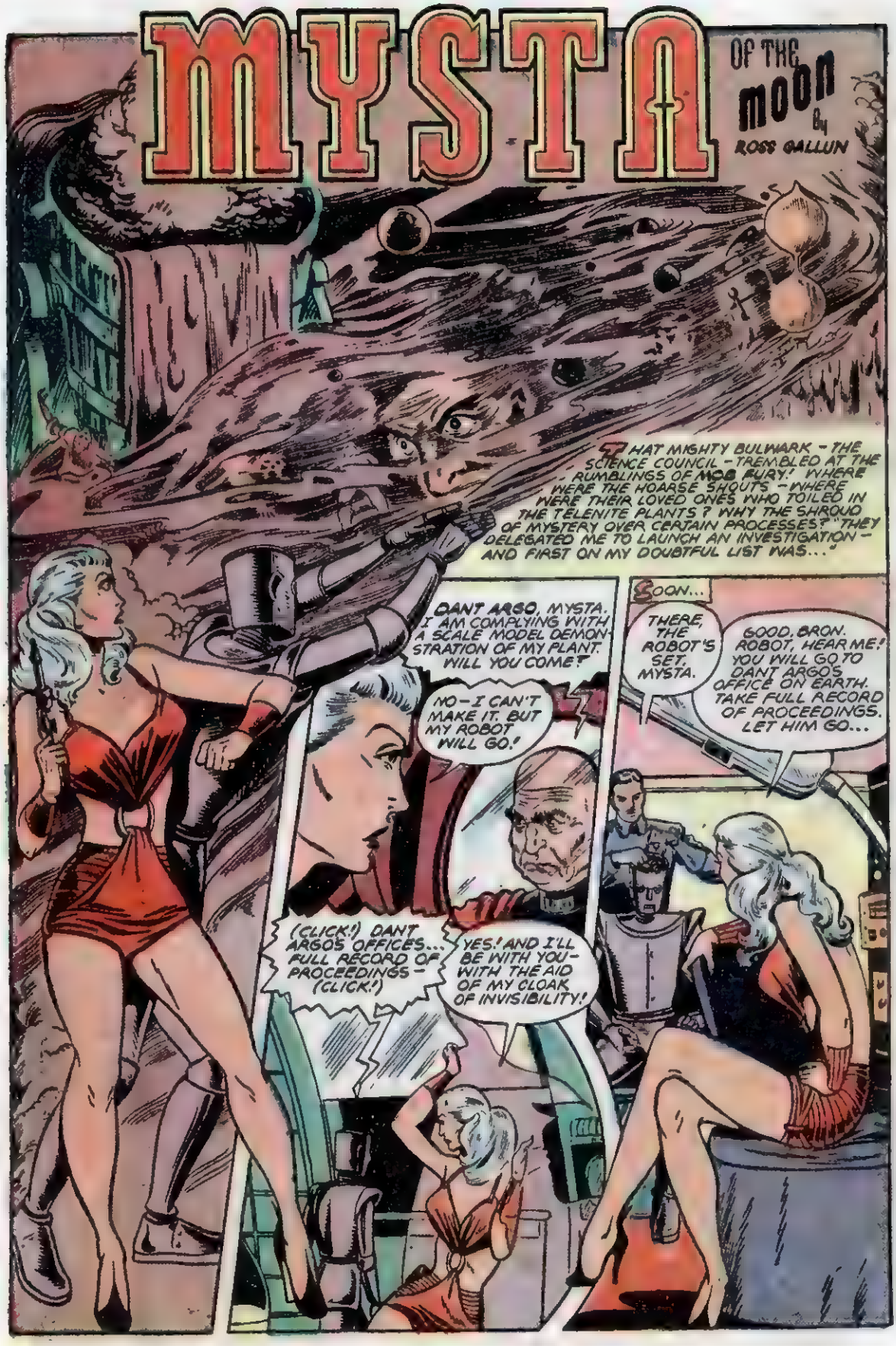

GOT HIM — WHAT? HE'S MAKING LIKE A BIRD!
HE'S STANDING RIGHT NEAR THE DRAGON'S MOUTH! IT'S NOW OR NEVER...
END OF THE LINE, BOYS! MURDERS — TAILORED-TO-ORDER IS HEREBY DISSOLVED!
LOOK OUT! WE'RE FALLING INTO THE MOUTH!
YOU CAN SAY THAT AGAIN — WHAT'S THAT?
NO! NO! HELP ME! SOMETHING'S GRABBING ME!
GREAT SCOTT! A GIANT GURA NESTING INSIDE THE BRONZE DRAGON — THEY EAT METAL!
AAAHH!
THAT OUGHT TO DISSOLVE THEM AND THE GURA — PERMANENTLY! BUT LOOK!
ALL THE MURDER WEAPONS! GOLD, GEMS, LOOT!
RIGHT, VALDA! GURA'S CAN'T DIGEST THE METAL THEY EAT — SO... GRAB SOME, BLACKY!
JUSTICE HAS BEEN SERVED! HOW CAN I EVER THANK YOU, STAR PIRATE?
TELL THE JUDGE WE'RE PRETTY GOOD GUYS, VALDA! LET'S GO, BLACKY!
OON...
WOW! RASCA WAS A VERY CLEVER GENT, EH, STAR? BUT WHAT ARE WE GONNA DO WITH ALL THE LOOT?
FREE POP-CORN FOR THE GIRL PATROL SCOUTS, BLACKY!
STAR PIRATE APPEARS IN EVERY ISSUE OF PLANET COMICS!

Life on other Worlds

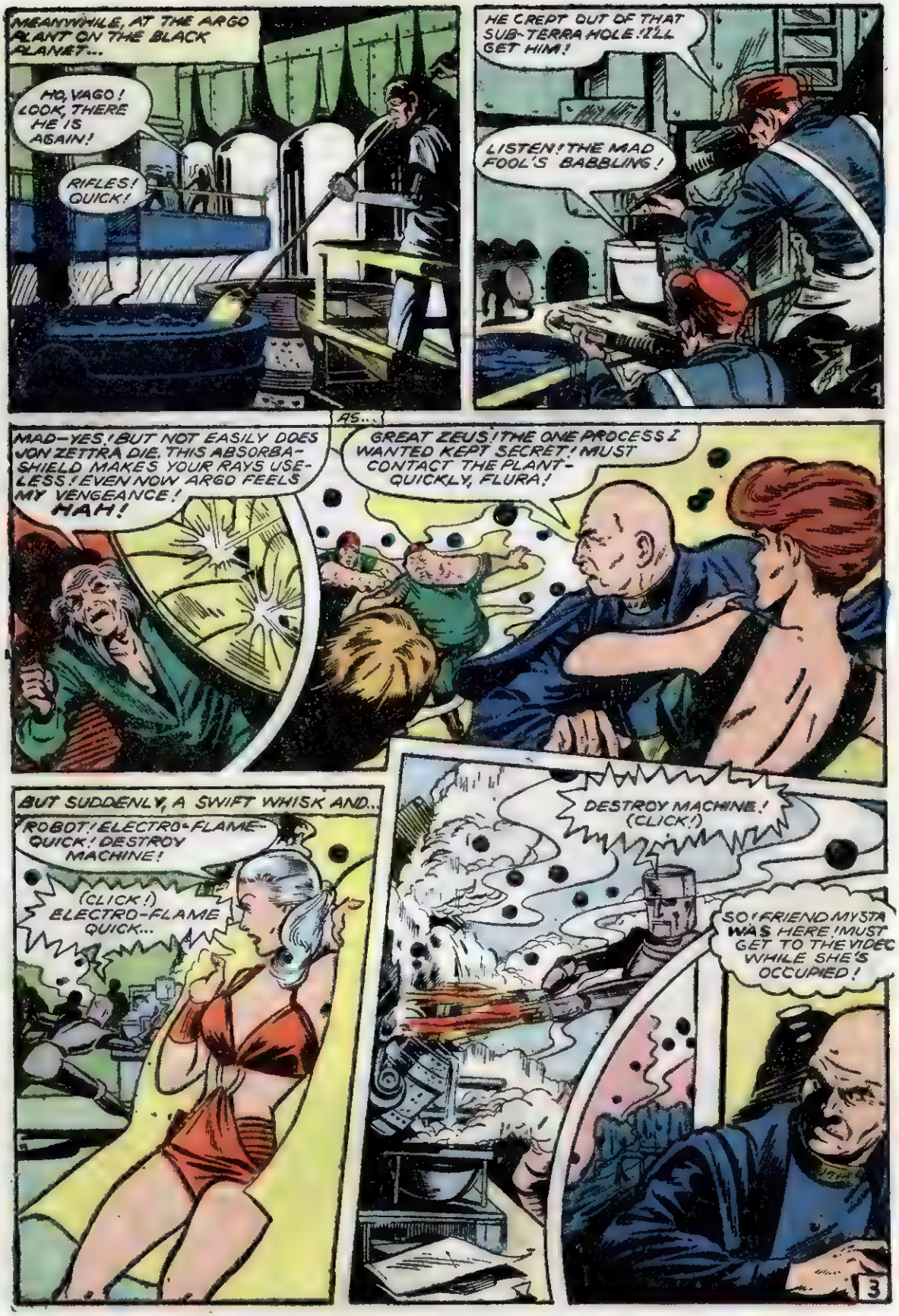


LIVING DEATH

A PRISON WITHOUT WALLS IS THE DOOM OF THOSE SUBJECTED TO THE LUNG OPERATION OF THE MOLE MEN ON ASTEROID ANTA. ONCE ATTUNED TO THEIR FOUL AIR, THE VICTIM CAN NO LONGER ENDURE THE ATMOSPHERE OF HIS NATIVE PLANET. HE MUST EXIST FOR ETERNITY IN THEIR HORROR LAND – UNLESS THE BRUTAL CHAMBER PROCESS IS INTERRUPTED IN TIME! BUT NOT EASILY DO THE SUB-TERRA FIENDS PERMIT INTRUSION INTO THE GRIM VAULTS OF THEIR SURGERY SANCTUM, AND SAVAGELY DO THEY DEFEND IT!

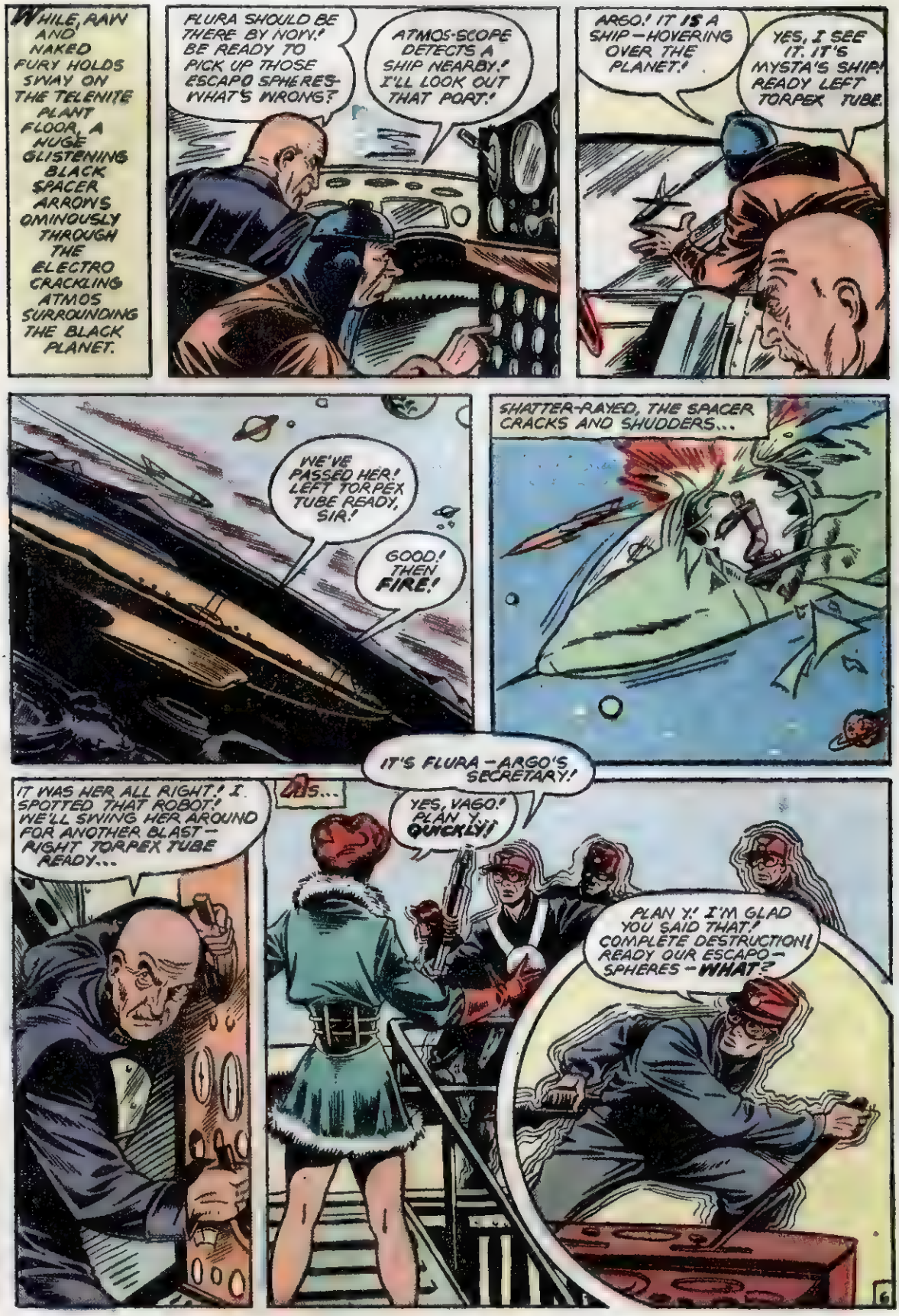

MYSTA
OF THE moon
By ROSS GALLUN
THAT MIGHTY BULWARK - THE SCIENCE COUNCIL - TREMBLED AT THE RUMBLINGS OF MOB FURY! WHERE WERE THE HOARSE SHOUTS - WHERE WERE THEIR LOVED ONES WHO TOILED IN THE TELENITE PLANTS? WHY THE SHROUD OF MYSTERY OVER CERTAIN PROCESSES? THEY DELEGATED ME TO LAUNCH AN INVESTIGATION - AND FIRST ON MY DOUBTFUL LIST WAS..."
DANT ARGO, MYSTA. I AM COMPLYING WITH A SCALE MODEL DEMONSTRATION OF MY PLANT. WILL YOU COME?
NO - I CAN'T MAKE IT. BUT MY ROBOT WILL GO!
(CLICK!) DANT ARGOS OFFICES... FULL RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS - (CLICK!)
YES! AND I'LL BE WITH YOU - WITH THE AID OF MY CLOAK OF INVISIBILITY!
SOON...
THERE, THE ROBOT'S SET, MYSTA.
GOOD, BRON. ROBOT, HEAR ME! YOU WILL GO TO DANT ARGO'S OFFICE ON EARTH. TAKE FULL RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS. LET HIM GO...

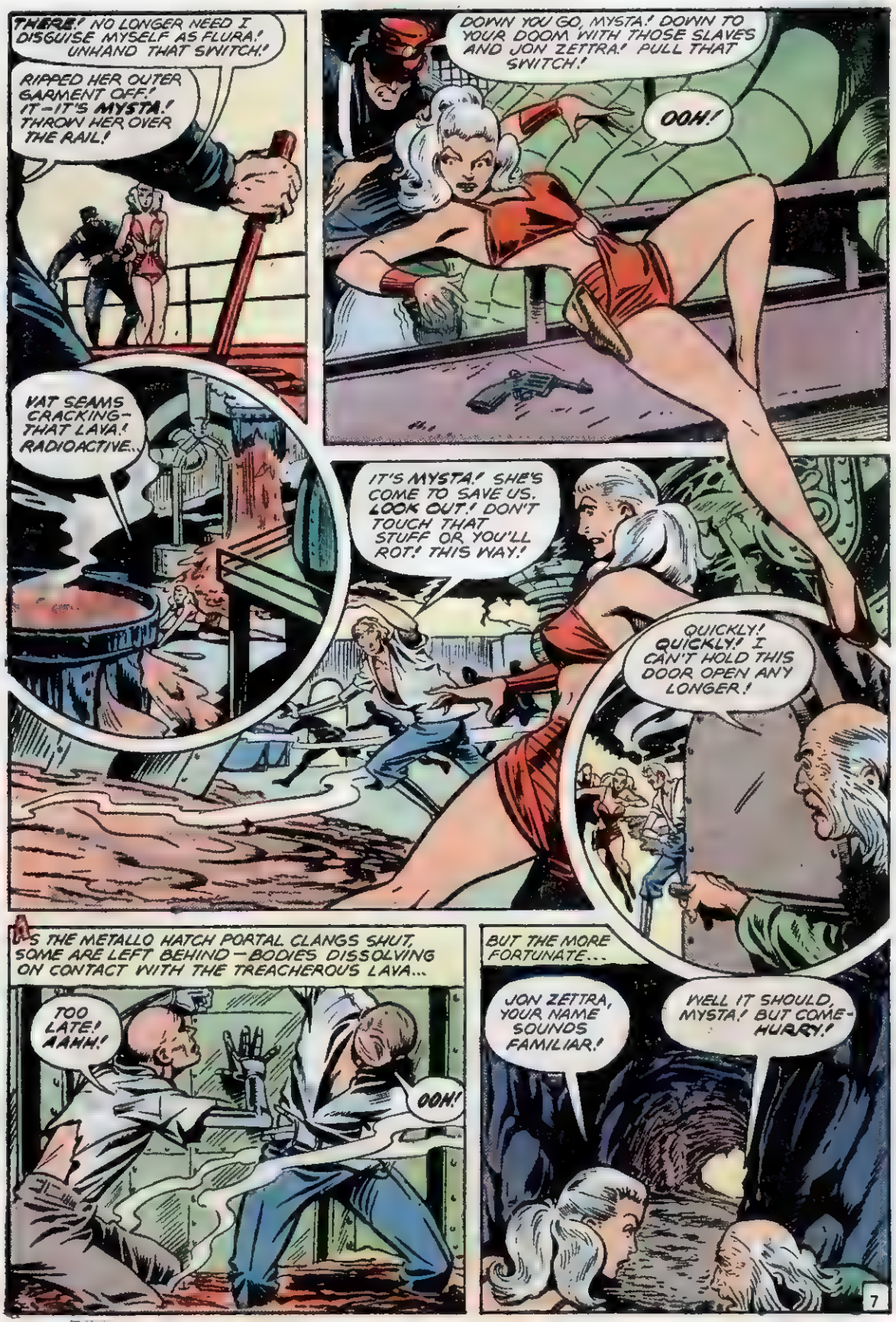
LATER, AT THE ULTRA PLASTI-OFFICES OF ARGO, CONSOLIDATED...
EXCELLENT! ALL PRESENT! GENTLEMEN OF THE SCIENCE COUNCIL, I PRODUCE LIFE-GIVING TELENITE, AS YOU KNOW. WITH THIS SCALE MODEL, I INTEND TO RIP THE MYSTERY FROM ITS PROCESS! NOW...
YOU WILL SEE HOW HARMLESS IT IS, AS MY ASSISTANTS WILL START THE OPERATION, AND MY SECRETARY WILL TAKE THE NOTES. BEGIN!
WHY DON'T THOSE FOOLS START? THEY KNOW IT'S SPECIALLY CONSTRUCTED TO ELIMINATE THE ONE VITAL PROCESS!
I DON'T LIKE THIS! THAT ROBOT SEEMS ALMOST HUMAN.
SHH! THAT THINGS RECORDING EVERY WORD WE SAY, TAKING OUR PICTURE... HERE, I'LL START THE THING!
SUPPOSING SOMETHIN' GOES WRONG?
NOW, GENTLEMEN, THE HUGE VATS OF LAVA POUR AT A PAR-RATO OF... WHAT? THOSE BUBBLES...
BLACK BUBBLES! BACK! BACK! DON'T LET THEM TOUCH YOU!
OOH! IT BURST...
SHUT IT OFF, YOU FOOLS! SHUT IT OFF!
C-CAN'T! ONE HIT ME! LOOK!
I'M BLOATING! I'M..LISTEN— THAT VOICE!
ARGO! THIS IS THE WARNING OF JON ZETTRA!
2

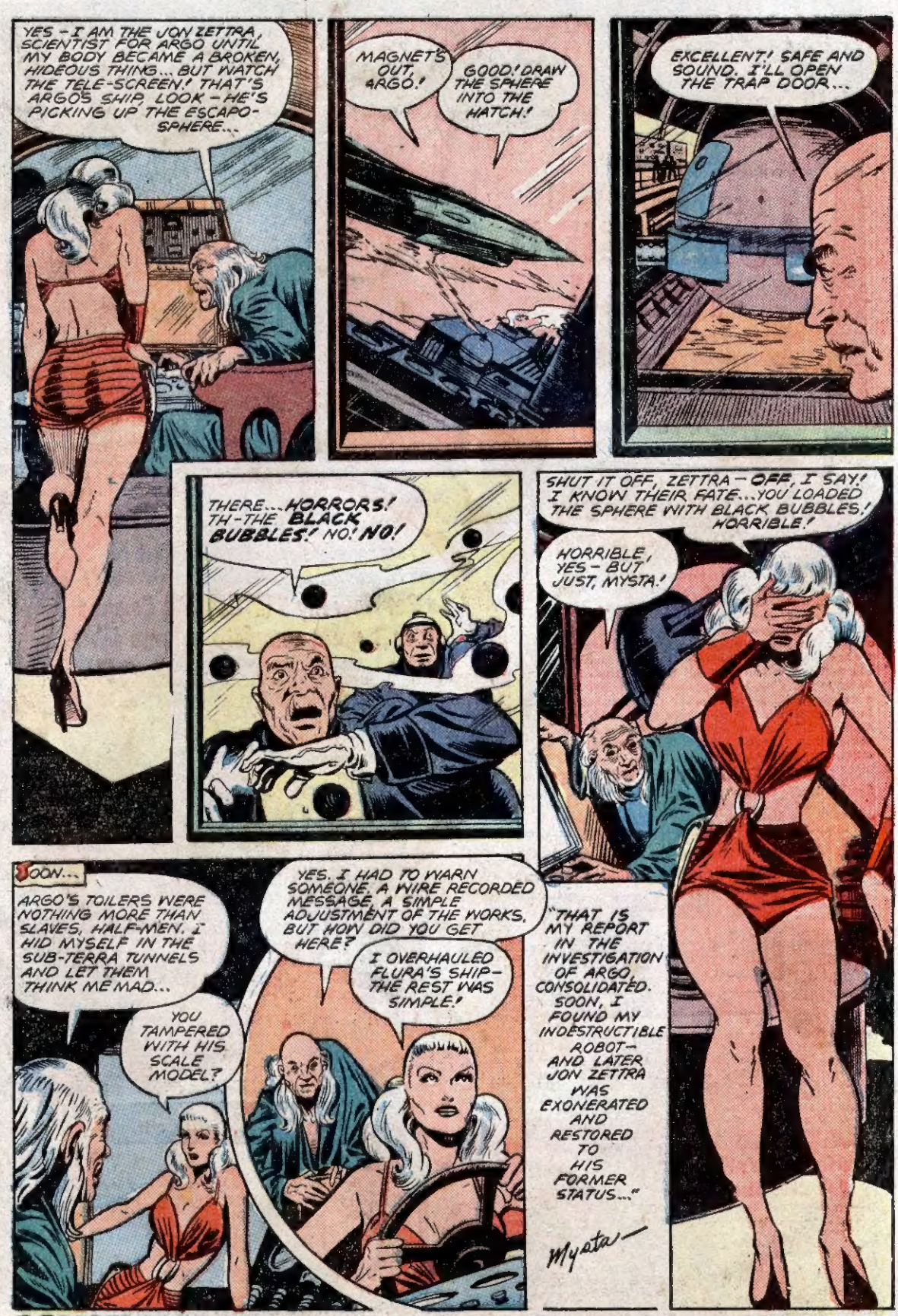

MEANWHILE, AT THE ARGO PLANT ON THE BLACK PLANET...
HO, VAGO! LOOK, THERE HE IS AGAIN!
RIFLES! QUICK!
HE CREPT OUT OF THAT SUB-TERRA HOLE! I'LL GET HIM!
LISTEN! THE MAD FOOL'S BABBLING!
AS...
MAD—YES! BUT NOT EASILY DOES JON ZETTRA DIE. THIS ABSORBA-SHIELD MAKES YOUR RAYS USE-LESS! EVEN NOW ARGO FEELS MY VENGEANCE! HAH!
GREAT ZEUS! THE ONE PROCESS I WANTED KEPT SECRET! MUST CONTACT THE PLANT—QUICKLY, FLURA!
BUT SUDDENLY, A SWIFT WHISK AND..
ROBOT! ELECTRO-FLAME—QUICK! DESTROY MACHINE!
(CLICK!) ELECTRO-FLAME QUICK...
DESTROY MACHINE! (CLICK!)
SO! FRIEND MYSTA WAS HERE! MUST GET TO THE VIDEC WHILE SHE'S OCCUPIED!
3

SOON...
THERE YOU ARE, VAGO! QUICK, YOU FOOL, WHAT HAPPENED? SOMEONE TAMPERED WITH THAT SCALE MODEL...
YES, YES! MUST HAVE BEEN THAT MADMAN ZETTRA!
HE VOICED HORRIBLE VENGEANCE TO BE WROUGHT UPON US ALL! EVEN NOW HE HAS STARTED REVOLT..I'LL TURN ON THE VIZIPLATE! WATCH!
LEAVING THEIR JOBS! GET BACK TO WORK, SLAVES!
NEVER! OUR LOT IS CAST WITH JON ZETTRA!
HALF-MEN! ROBOTS FROM INFERNO! THAT'S ALL WE ARE. ARGO REPLACES OUR ROTTING BODY PARTS WITH PLASTIC-BUT HE CAN'T REPLACE OUR SOULS! STRIKE!
FILTHY SLAVES. LOOK-LOOK AT THEM NOW!
SMASHING THE MACHINERY! KILL THEM!
YES, KILL US-KILL US! BUT WE'LL DESTROY THESE HORROR BUBBLES FOREVER! AAH!
ENOUGH, VAGO! HOLD THEM OFF! I'LL SEND FLURA WITH MY ORDERS-AND I'LL FOLLOW TO PICK YOU UP!
I'LL LEAVE IMMEDIATELY, ARGO-AND TRAVEL ALONE.
YES, FLURA-TRAVEL YOU SHALL! BUT ALONE? WE SHALL SEE...
4

SOON... THE AUTO-CONTROL IS SET. THE SHIP WILL TAKE YOU DIRECTLY TO THE PLANT.
YES, ARGO! AND I'M TO TELL VAGO TO USE PLAN Y. BUT I MUST BE OFF!
A LOUD WHOOSH, AND THE GLEAMING SPACER STREAKS SKYWARD...
GONE! NOW TO GET MY SPECIAL SPACE-SHIP AND FOLLOW - TO COMPLETE PLAN Y!
LATER..
GOOD THING I OVER-HEARD THEM! FLURA IS MAKING GOOD TIME...
ROBOT, ACCELERATE JET SPEED!
ACCORDING TO OUR RADA-SCOPE WE'RE BUT TEN MILOS AWAY FROM THE BLACK PLANET! IT'S TIME TO ACT! ROBOT...
CLICK!
MEANWHILE
DOWN WITH ARGO! BRINGS US HERE TO ROT IN THIS STINKING HELL-HOLE! SMASH - DESTROY - KILL!!
RUNNING AMUCK! WE CAN'T KILL THEM ALL... WHAT?
LISTEN! THAT VOICE AGAIN!
GUARDS! THOSE REPELLO RAYS THAT PROTECT YOU FROM THESE RADIOACTIVE MUDS WILL NOT SAVE YOU FROM THE VENGEANCE OF JON ZETTRA!


WHILE, RAW AND NAKED FURY HOLDS SWAY ON THE TELENITE PLANT FLOOR, A HUGE GLISTENING BLACK SPACER ARROWS OMINOUSLY THROUGH THE ELECTRO CRACKLING ATMOS SURROUNDING THE BLACK PLANET.
FLURA SHOULD BE THERE BY NOW! BE READY TO PICK UP THOSE ESCAPO SPHERES— WHAT'S WRONG?
ATMOS-SCOPE DETECTS A SHIP NEARBY! I'LL LOOK OUT THAT PORT!
ARGO! IT IS A SHIP—HOVERING OVER THE PLANET!
YES, I SEE IT. IT'S MYSTA'S SHIP! READY LEFT TORPEX TUBE.
WE'VE PASSED HER! LEFT TORPEX TUBE READY, SIR!
GOOD! THEN FIRE!
SHATTER-RAYED, THE SPACER CRACKS AND SHUDDERS...
IT'S FLURA—ARGO'S SECRETARY!
IT WAS HER ALL RIGHT! I SPOTTED THAT ROBOT! WE'LL SWING HER AROUND FOR ANOTHER BLAST— RIGHT TORPEX TUBE READY...
YES, VAGO! PLAN Y... QUICKLY!
PLAN Y! I'M GLAD YOU SAID THAT! COMPLETE DESTRUCTION! READY OUR ESCAPO— SPHERES—WHAT?


THERE! NO LONGER NEED I DISGUISE MYSELF AS FLURA! UNHAND THAT SWITCH!
RIPPED HER OUTER GARMENT OFF! IT—IT'S MYSTA! THROW HER OVER THE RAIL!
DOWN YOU GO, MYSTA! DOWN TO YOUR DOOM WITH THOSE SLAVES AND JON ZETTRA! PULL THAT SWITCH!
OOH!
VAT SEAMS CRACKING— THAT LAVA! RADIOACTIVE..
IT'S MYSTA! SHE'S COME TO SAVE US. LOOK OUT! DON'T TOUCH THAT STUFF OR YOU'LL ROT! THIS WAY!
QUICKLY! QUICKLY! I CAN'T HOLD THIS DOOR OPEN ANY LONGER!
AS THE METALLO HATCH PORTAL CLANGS SHUT, SOME ARE LEFT BEHIND—BODIES DISSOLVING ON CONTACT WITH THE TREACHEROUS LAVA...
TOO LATE! AAHH!
OOH!
BUT THE MORE FORTUNATE...
JON ZETTRA, YOUR NAME SOUNDS FAMILIAR!
WELL IT SHOULD, MYSTA! BUT COME— HURRY!


YES – I AM THE JON ZETTRA, SCIENTIST FOR ARGO UNTIL MY BODY BECAME A BROKEN, HIDEOUS THING... BUT WATCH THE TELE-SCREEN! THAT'S ARGO'S SHIP, LOOK – HE'S PICKING UP THE ESCAPO-SPHERE...
MAGNET'S OUT, ARGO!
GOOD! DRAW THE SPHERE INTO THE HATCH!
EXCELLENT! SAFE AND SOUND. I'LL OPEN THE TRAP DOOR...
THERE... HORRORS! TH-THE BLACK BUBBLES! NO! NO!
SHUT IT OFF, ZETTRA – OFF, I SAY! I KNOW THEIR FATE... YOU LOADED THE SPHERE WITH BLACK BUBBLES! HORRIBLE!
HORRIBLE, YES – BUT JUST, MYSTA!
SOON...
ARGO'S TOILERS WERE NOTHING MORE THAN SLAVES, HALF-MEN. I HID MYSELF IN THE SUB-TERRA TUNNELS AND LET THEM THINK ME MAD...
YOU TAMPERED WITH HIS SCALE MODEL?
YES. I HAD TO WARN SOMEONE. A WIRE RECORDED MESSAGE, A SIMPLE ADJUSTMENT OF THE WORKS. BUT HOW DID YOU GET HERE?
I OVERHAULED FLURA'S SHIP – THE REST WAS SIMPLE!
"THAT IS MY REPORT IN THE INVESTIGATION OF ARGO, CONSOLIDATED. SOON, I FOUND MY INDESTRUCTIBLE ROBOT – AND LATER JON ZETTRA WAS EXONERATED AND RESTORED TO HIS FORMER STATUS..."
Mysta

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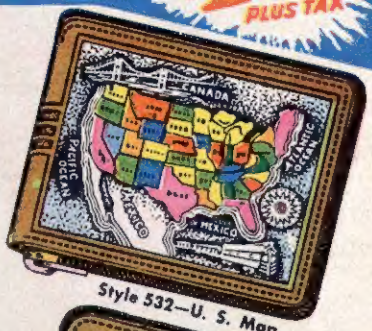

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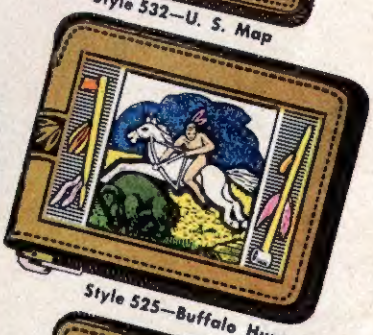

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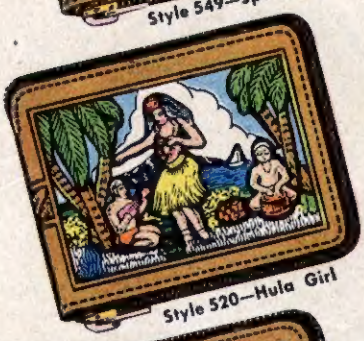

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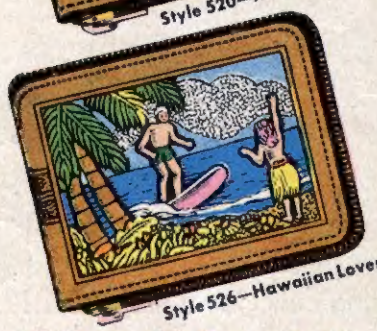

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